

Oral History Interview
with
C. GIRARD DAVIDSON

Attorney Tennessee Valley Authority, 1934-37; Bonneville Power Administration, Portland, Oregon, 1940-42, general counsel, 1943-46; consultant Office of Production Management, Washington, 1941-42; assistant general counsel, War Production Board, 1944-45; Assistant Secretary of the Interior, 1946-50; national Democratic elector, 1952; member of the Democratic National Committee from Oregon, 1956-63; chairman, National Democratic Committee on Natural Resources; chairman, Western States Democratic Conference, 1960-63; Member Oregon Educational Coordination Commission, 1972; Chairman, 1974-75; President Alaska Pacific Lumber Company, 1958-; Attorney, Portland, Oregon, 1950-.

Washington, D.C.
July 17 and 18, 1972
by Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

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HESS: Mr. Davidson, to get underway this afternoon, would you tell me a little about your personal background, where you were born, where you were educated, and what positions have you held?

DAVIDSON: I was born in Lafayette, Louisiana, July 28, 1910. I went to public schools, elementary and high schools in Lafayette, and then to college in Lafayette also at what was then known as Southwestern Louisiana Institute. It is now Southwestern Louisiana University. I received my A.B. degree there in

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1930 and then went on to Tulane University in New Orleans where I received my LL.B. degree (Bachelor of Laws) in 1933. Since this was the midst of the depression and the best job one could get as a lawyer in New Orleans was \$50 a month, I managed to get a Sterling Fellowship to Yale Law School. I was in residence at New Haven for the school year 1933-34 and completed my dissertation a year later. In 1936 I received the degree of Doctor of Juridical Science at Yale. But at that time I was with the TVA in Knoxville, Tennessee.

HESS: Then you went to Bonneville...

DAVIDSON: Then I stayed at TVA -- this was the early days of the New Deal. My field was power. Joseph Swidler and I were the two attorneys who primarily handled power matters of TVA. I stayed there until 1937 and returned to Lafayette to practice law with my brother under the firm name of Davidson

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and Davidson. After being there about a year, I was asked by David Krooth and Leon Keyserling, who was then Deputy Administrator of the United States Housing Authority, to come to Washington, D.C., and head a rate negotiation section of the United States Housing Authority. That must have been in 1939, so I spent nine months at that time obtaining state utility company rulings for master metering of housing projects. I then went back to Lafayette to practice law and at the same time taught a course at Southwestern Louisiana on American Government and Constitutional Law. However, the American Government course was only the first semester. The second semester I taught Louisiana government which was quite difficult immediately after the rule of Huey Long.

While in Lafayette I was called by Billy Martin, who had been at TVA with me and who was then with Bonneville Power Administration in Portland, Oregon. James Lawrence Fly who had been General Counsel of TVA was also at Bonneville,

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and asked me to come out there to help negotiate the purchase of Puget Sound Power and Light Company by the Bonneville Power Administration. So I went to Portland and agreed to stay six months as a consultant. That six months started in 1940 and my residence has been in Oregon ever since.

HESS: What are your earliest recollections of Mr. Truman?

DAVIDSON: I did not know Mr. Truman as an individual until I was appointed Assistant Secretary of Interior. That took place in '46.

HESS: How did you receive that appointment; how did that come about?

DAVIDSON: Well, I went out to Bonneville in 1940 and I was made Assistant Secretary of the Interior in '46. While at Bonneville I also worked with

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the Office of Production Management. We were in the midst of developing a stepped-up power program at Bonneville to provide power for aluminum companies, because President Roosevelt had said we needed 25,000 airplanes. At the request of Cap [Julius] Krug, who was at that point at the Office of Production Management, I went down to Atlanta, Georgia to ration power throughout the Southeast. We had to save power so that it could be diverted into defense materials rather than unessential uses. I first met Cap Krug when he was chief engineer of the Kentucky Public Service Commission and I was at TVA. As I was in the power field at Bonneville it was natural for him to call on me to come help him down in Atlanta. I was there the day of Pearl Harbor.

At the end of that job I returned to Portland

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as General Counsel of Bonneville. The War Production Board was then created. During this period I was General Counsel at Bonneville in Portland, and I was an Assistant General Counsel of the War Production Board in Washington, D.C.. Krug had been head of WPB's Power Division and when he became head of the War Production Board I stayed as counsel for the Power Division with Edward Falck as its head.

While at WPB, and at the same time I was at Bonneville which is in the Interior Department, there was a great deal of correspondence going back and forth between the Power Division of the War Production Board and with Mr. [Harold] Ickes in the Department of Interior. Abe Fortas was then Under Secretary, and Tex [Arthur E.] Goldschmidt was head of Interiors Power Division. There were great fights about who would have jurisdiction over power. I would write one letter for Mr. Ickes' signature and then turn around and prepare an answer

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for Mr. Krug. Thus, I knew Krug and worked closely with him not only in Atlanta but also at WPB. When Ickes was fired by President Truman and Krug became Secretary of the Interior, I was about the only one in Interior Department that Krug knew, and I immediately came back to Washington from Portland and worked with him during the time that he was getting confirmed and afterwards. I think it just became natural for him to appoint me, as well as Warner Gardner, who was then Solicitor of the Department, as the two Assistant Secretaries. He elevated Oscar Chapman to the position of Under Secretary.

HESS: Before we leave Mr. Ickes, what is your opinion of his handling of the Department of Interior at the time he was Secretary?

DAVIDSON: Well, I liked Mr. Ickes. You knew where he stood, and one had a definite feeling as an underling that when you were carrying out his policy,

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that you wouldn't be run out on. This was very important during the time that I was General Counsel at Bonneville, because we were trying to buy out the Puget Sound Power and Light Company. We needed financing, and Mr. Ickes, I remember, tried to get us money through Jesse Jones over at the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. They had a nice set-to on that question because Jones basically did not believe in any kind of public ownership of utilities and Ickes did. Obviously, we never got the money from RFC.

But while at Bonneville I was advocating a Columbia Valley Authority for the Pacific Northwest because I felt that the great TVA experience should be transferred to other river basins.

HESS: Just one thing more and then I want to get into the development of your thought about CVA, the Columbia Valley Authority.

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What do you recall about Mr. Ickes' resignation?

DAVIDSON: Well, at that time, I was, of course, out in Portland, Oregon, as General Counsel at Bonneville. I do not remember much about it except that it seemed to me there was some argument he had with the President. I've forgotten what it was about but his resignation was pretty sudden. But it was not so sudden that there was not time for Mr. Fortas to resign as Under Secretary first. I think Ickes' resignation came within about a week or ten days later. Mr. Ickes liked his department, was jealous of its jurisdiction and he had the reputation of wanting to take on additional agencies from other departments such as the Forest Service. He did not want to give anything up.

HESS: Was he an empire builder?

DAVIDSON: I think so, but that so often happens in

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Government, and I guess this is why I would sometime get myself into trouble. My first experience in Government was at the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the one thing we prided ourselves on was that this agency was a self-contained operation covering a region, and no other agency could come in and interfere. We did not report to anyone in Washington, D.C. except the President. The board of directors reported to the President and to Congress. They were administering the law and the agency operated extremely efficiently. I had been with the U.S. Housing Authority, the Department of Interior and I had seen other agencies operate. TVA was an extremely efficient operation. When I went to the Northwest we had the same kind of problems that were encountered in the Tennessee Valley, but the Government administration was different. The Columbia River needed dams on it but the Army Engineers were building some of the dams, the Bureau of Reclamation building some, the Army Engineers in charge of

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flood control and navigation, the Bonneville Power Administration was handling the sale of power, the Fish and Wildlife Service was responsible for the salmon in the river; the Bureau of Reclamation handling irrigation water. So many agencies were involved that programs either bogged down or were constantly involved in jurisdictional disputes.

Having seen the way TVA worked, I naturally thought we should have a Columbia Valley Authority in the Northwest. So I started making speeches on the subject. Dr. [Paul] Raver who was then head of the Bonneville Power Administration, went along with me. We felt Bonneville should be a regional agency and I had certain legislation passed (Tom Clark was then Attorney General), taking jurisdiction away from the Department of Justice and turning it over to Bonneville so we could handle our own legal matters. The President signed the bill and then Senator [Walter G.] Magnuson and Tom Clark made a deal and a short time

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later this progress was reversed and the Department of Justice was again put back in charge of Bonneville's legal matters. I just didn't like this kind of inefficient administration. One of the things that Columbia Valley Authority would have done was to take the dam constructing business away from both the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Engineers. The Columbia Valley Authority would handle all of the resource problems in the Columbia Basin which are now scattered among about fifteen or twenty different agencies.

HESS: Those are two powerful organizations: The Army Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation.

DAVIDSON: Exactly.

HESS: Did you think that you were going to get them to give up a good deal of their authority and power?

DAVIDSON: Not voluntarily but I was always optimistic

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and in this kind of thing it depended on how much muscle you had. Mike Straus had been appointed several months before Mr. Ickes left, as Commissioner of Reclamation. I remember that one day I was buzzed in my Portland office by the Administrator of Bonneville, Dr. Raver. He said, "Come into the office." I went in there and he threw a telegram at me from Secretary Ickes reading this way:

Please report in my office Monday morning at 10 a.m. for a discussion of your activities in relation to a Columbia Valley Authority. Bring Davidson with you.

Well, I said, "Paul, here are our walking papers. We've expected it to come." We went back to Washington for the meeting with Secretary Ickes. Mike Straus, Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, was the chief complaining witness.

HESS: You were on trial.

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DAVIDSON: We were on trial. We were accused of taking all of this jurisdiction away from Interior, and giving it to an independent agency. There must have been twenty people sitting around this big room that Secretary Ickes used, but Krug used only for ceremonial occasions. Under Secretary Fortas was there and was helpful to our point of view. There was a good deal of discussion as to whether the CVA would report to the President through the Secretary of the Interior. Ickes would have bought this but those believing in the Valley Authority principle felt it must be independent.

It is not a matter of public record, but what happened at that discussion was that Raver and I talked fast enough and around the subject enough so that the old man took it under advisement, and within two weeks he was out, and Krug was made the head of Interior, and Krug was, of course, a TVA man who felt as strong or stronger than I did on the subject.

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HESS: Did he really feel as strongly as you did on this matter?

DAVIDSON: On TVA, yes.

HESS: On TVA. All right, what about CVA?

DAVIDSON: On CVA. Yes, he did. There was no question about how he felt, but Krug was never a person to really get out and fight like some of the rest of us did. But on this issue, there was no question where he stood. When he would get into a discussion of that subject, you knew that you were always going to be backed up by Krug on this subject. It was ironic that after the so-called trial by Mike Straus to have us fired for espousing CVA that I became Assistant Secretary. My jurisdiction and authority were then greater than that of Commissioner Straus. The tables just turned completely; the Secretary of the Department of Interior was a Valley Authority man. I began working then to see how we could

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get a Columbia Valley Authority, which I thought would be easier to secure than a Missouri Valley Authority.

HESS: Why?

DAVIDSON: Because it was a smaller region to begin with, more cohesive and integrated.

HESS: Less populated?

DAVIDSON: Less populated than the Missouri River Basin which involved a much larger area. CVA was basically in the Northwest and had three states involved: Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

HRSS: And western Montana.

DAVIDSON: Well, western Montana, that's right, over as far as the Continental Divide, but in the Missouri River Basin you had about ten or eleven states. The irrigation problems were many in the Missouri Basin and we felt that we had a better chance because the political climate we thought

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would be better.

HESS: General [Lewis A.] Pick at this time was head of the Army Engineers, was he not?

DAVIDSON: Yes.

HESS: He had his plan set up for the Missouri Valley, what later became known as the Pick-Sloan plan. Did you feel that he was too far advanced or too far along with his own plans to try to counter his views?

DAVIDSON: No. The Pick-Sloan plan, as you remember, was to divide up the dam constructing operations between the Army Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. This was only done, in our opinion, to stop the movement for the Missouri Valley Authority. Prior to the Pick-Sloan plan, you recall, there was a knockdown, drag out fight between Reclamation and the Army Engineers. Whichever one could get to the site first and start scratching the

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dirt a little bit would then rush into Congress and say, "This is a project we've already started working on, it's underway, so give us the money." That fight between the two is the very reason that some of us felt one agency ought to do the job and not have it done on a haphazard basis. But as the proposal for a Missouri Valley Authority gained strength, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Engineers got together and came out with this new Pick-Sloan plan. Pick was one of the very close friends of President Truman. He was a very highly respected engineer but was shortsighted when it came to handling the problems of a river basin as was Commissioner of Reclamation Sloan. They were interested in protecting and increasing the jurisdiction of their agencies.

HESS: As I understand, one of the main objections or the opponents of the CVA, was that it would remove authority from the area and bring the Federal Government into closer review of operations.

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Isn't that counter to what you mentioned awhile ago, about keeping the authority in the area?

DAVIDSON: No! There is a fundamental difference between a Valley Authority and a Departmental concept. Mr. Ickes, as Secretary of Interior, the Commissioner of Reclamation, and the head of the Army Engineers were typical of most Government agencies and had almost every problem coming to Washington, through the Department for decision. The fundamental principle of TVA, CVA, and MVA was that you would have a board of directors appointed from and

living in the region itself, dealing with the problems day-to-day and making decisions in the region itself -- not in Washington, D.C. You must remember we are only talking about problems and decisions that the Federal Government as distinguished from local government is called upon to make.

HESS: Did all three directors have to be from the

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area, or two of the three?

DAVIDSON: In different bills this was handled in different ways. I always felt it didn't make too much difference where they actually came from. The directors would have to live in the region and be familiar with its problems so that they could make better informed decisions.

HESS: Still those men were not elected, they were appointed.

DAVIDSON: How about the Secretary of Interior? Is he elected?

HESS: No.

DAVIDSON: Is the Commissioner of Reclamation elected?

HESS: No.

DAVIDSON: Is the Chief of the Army Engineers elected?

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HESS: No.

DAVIDSON: And they are certainly a lot harder to get at from a public standpoint than the people who are living day-to-day in the region, able to be seen daily by the people of the region, and being responsible for the actions that they take in the area. This is why I think there's just no question about it. I still believe that the present method of handling our natural resources stinks. It's completely inefficient, and, sure, we are wasting money all the time and not getting as good a job done. But, of course, the power companies were joined with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Engineers, and I think you've seen the article entitled "The Lobby Which Can't be Beat."

HESS: All right, as Assistant Secretary, what were your principal duties and what were your secondary duties, if you had to outline them in such a manner?

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DAVIDSON: Well, I was Assistant Secretary for four years, and during that time my duties changed considerably. When Mr. Warner Gardner and I were originally appointed Assistant Secretaries by Secretary Krug, we divided up the work; at first each of us covered every agency in the Department. Prior to that time, as I've already indicated, Mr. Ickes believed in a centralized

administration. The only people who could sign the Secretary's name to documents were the Secretary, Under Secretary or an Assistant Secretary and there was very little delegation to the Bureau chiefs. During the first several months that Mr. Gardner and I were there, the mountains of mail would be wheeled in on very large trucks. We decided early that one of us would sign the mail for a week, and because this was practically a full-time job, the other one would do some thinking about how we could get out from under this mountain. After we managed to get some of the responsibility redelegated

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to the bureau chiefs and pushed them to delegate on out to the field, then we had time to take a little broader look at the Department.

I've forgotten all of the various changes and bureau assignments that I had but I remember that I supervised at times the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Oil and Gas Division, the Bureau of Mines, the Geological Survey. It was evident that some regional type representation was necessary in the various bureaus. Secretary Krug issued an order saying that all of the Department's agencies in the Pacific Northwest would be under my jurisdiction, and all of the agencies in the State of Alaska were going to be under Mr. Gardner's jurisdiction for planning purposes.

HESS: Did you approve of that, sir?

DAVIDSON: I certainly did, and it was at that time that we established the so-called Departmental

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field committees. We brought in the top man of each of the Department agencies in a region for meetings and in a number of instances this was the first time they'd ever met their counterparts. Prior to that all of his contacts were in a particular bureau and went from the region back to Washington, then up to the Secretary. We established the Pacific Northwest Field Committee, with Roy Bessey as the full-time man on my staff located in Portland, Oregon, to pull the agencies together, and let them start talking to each other about how they could best execute the Department's programs in that area. We couldn't do anything about matters outside of the Interior Department, but we did try to make contacts and eventually there were interdepartmental committees in the regions.

HESS: You could coordinate activities within the Department anyway.

DAVIDSON: We could try. It was difficult because the

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old line agencies in the Department thought it was revolutionary to try to make decisions in the field and they didn't like it as decision-making was always in Washington.

HESS: Your first job connected with public power was TVA, is that correct?

DAVIDSON: Yes, my first job after I got out of college and law school.

HESS: What led to your interest in public power? In other words, why did you take a job of that nature?

DAVIDSON: I had no idea about what I wanted to do but I came down to Washington after leaving Yale. I needed a job and it was in 1934, the early days of the New Deal, and I had a letter to a fellow by the name of Thomas Corcoran.

HESS: "Tommy the Cork?"

DAVIDSON: Right. He had been a friend of Mr. [Monte M.]

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Lemann, a lawyer in New Orleans with whom my brother had worked and who knew me. I showed up in Corcoran's office, and he said, "Where do you want to go to work?"

And I said, "I haven't the slightest idea."

So he said, "Well, go see this person in the Department of Justice, this person at SEC, this person at AAA." (I remember that I was to see Abe Fortas at AAA, but he was out on the West Coast writing a peach code.) [Donald] Richberg at NRA; he sent me to people all over the place. I came back in three or four days later and he said, "Well, what do you think?"

I said, "Well, I'm so confused I don't have the slightest idea."

He said, "You know what you ought to do? You're from the South; you ought to go down to the TVA. I have a brother who is down there working for TVA, and I think it would be a great place for you to go."

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I said, "Fine."

So he picked up the phone and called Larry [James Lawrence] Fly to tell him he was going to send me down there to talk to him. Larry said, "Well, I'll be in Washington tomorrow, why don't I see him then?"

I said, "Fine." I met him at the Hay-Adams. We made a deal and that's how I ended up at TVA. No principles involved. But by the time I was out I...

HESS: Then you had your principles.

All right, what do you recall about the matter of desegregation of swimming pools in Washington, D.C., and on this subject, you were well-known as quite a civil libertarian, a champion of the colored people, I might say. How did you develop that attitude as you were a young man from Louisiana?

DAVIDSON: This is really a long story.

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HESS: Shorten it a little bit.

DAVIDSON: When I was president of a student council at Tulane University I came to a convention of the National Student Federation of America here in Washington, and I was one of the worst racists that you could find. I remember my argument with the representative from Vassar. She wanted blacks to come to a dinner and dance, and I was completely outraged, taking a typical Southern view. Now, fortunately I've come far from that point of view as you have seen from the record.

HESS: What changed your views? And did your view change?

DAVIDSON: My view started changing at TVA. It was the first time in my life I had ever worked side by side with blacks who were smarter than I, or as smart. I started to realize that they were people rather than somebody to be pushed around. Then,

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after returning to Washington with public housing (United States Housing Authority) I lost my prejudices and my philosophy changed completely, and I suppose I wanted to make up for my blindness. I worked on a committee of the City Club in Portland back in '36 on the economic problems which plagued the blacks. And when I came from there to be Assistant Secretary I felt we could not justify any segregation of public or recreation facilities, so I started to try to change the Government's policies.

HESS: What do you recall about the difficulty that you had in desegregating the swimming pools in the District, and perhaps arguments with the D.C. Commissioners?

DAVIDSON: Well, the swimming pools in Washington were administered by two agencies. The District Commissioners had six or seven pools under their jurisdiction and we had six or seven pools in the National Capital Parks. I didn't

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feel that the National Capital Parks ought to be running recreation facilities in the District. This is really a job for the District Recreation Board. But I also felt there should be no discrimination or segregation in the operation of the facilities, so I said that we would not turn over the swimming pools or recreation facilities to the District of Columbia until they quit their segregation policy which they refused to do. And this was, of course, a cause celebre, everyone was saying that we were moving too fast and the argument on opening the swimming pools to desegregated use ended up in the President's office.

HESS: Tell me about that meeting.

DAVIDSON: Well, there were several of the District Commissioners there.

HESS: All right. Now, they were John Russell Young, president of the board; Guy Mason, a Commissioner, and then Brigadier General Gordon R. Young, the Engineer Commissioner.

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DAVIDSON: That's right. They were present, and Secretary Krug went with me and let me do a good deal of the talking. I made the argument that everyone was a taxpayer and we had no business discriminating or segregating the use of public facilities. The Boss said "yes." he agreed.

It still was quite awhile before the District Board of Recreation would agree to our terms. The pools operated by the Department were also segregated, some were exclusively for black and some exclusively white. There were official plaits of the District of Columbia showing which recreation area could be frequented by black kids and which areas could be frequented by white kids.

HESS: Restricted areas.

DAVIDSON: Restricted areas, restricted playgrounds, restricted pools. Blacks could not go in a white pool; whites could not go in a black pool but this

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latter restriction was not so vigorously enforced. But after we were in the President's office, I then went to work to start desegregating swimming pools under the National Capital Parks, and that's when all hell broke loose. I remember I got a race relations specialist out of Chicago to come in.

HESS: Who was that?

DAVIDSON: I can't remember his name, but if I remember it, we'll add it.

HESS: What was the attitude of the Commissioners?

DAVIDSON: The Commissioners felt that eventually, in ten or fifteen years, we could get to the point where we could open the swimming pools to desegregated swimming, but now we mustn't move too fast. This was always the question. "We mustn't move too fast. We're not ready for it now. We'll have riots, we'll have race wars."

HESS: And Mr. Truman's view was that it was all right

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to move at that time?

DAVIDSON: Yes.

HESS: Do you recall what he said?

DAVIDSON: No, I don't. It's been a long time ago. I'll try to get my memory refreshed. Some of my assistants who were around at that time may have remembered, as I came back and told them and they might freshen my recollection. But I do remember after I came back and I had my race relations man from Chicago working with the park police (that had been his duty in Chicago, to teach the policeman how to handle such matters), and he worked constantly with the park police trying to get ready for the time that we were going to open the pools. The papers were carrying scare stories, headline stories, and I remember very vividly being called to the Under Secretary's office at this time on this matter. When I got there Phil Graham of the *Washington Post* who was its publisher and

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Under Secretary Chapman, both of whom had great liberal reputations, each told me I was moving too fast. "You will be running into riots," and "You can't do this now," and I said, "Everything's set; we're going to do it."

This is when Krug stood fast and said, yes, we were going to do it. That's why I feel that one can't always rely on the public reputation one is given. Oscar and Phil Graham, the great public liberals, were both saying, "Don't try," and Krug, who was liberal and also had guts, said "Yes. Go on." And, of course, the Boss had already given the green light which was the most important of all.

HESS: Were there any initial difficulties?

DAVIDSON: Yes, there were a few skirmishes. They tried to have a mob scene around the pool which had been the one announced to be open. I remember a very famous photograph which was spread in all

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the papers, showing a member of the police force on top of a horse with his upraised club and a kid down on the ground underneath it. Pictures like this did not help. In the first week it was touch and go, but we stuck to our guns. This was back in '46. It seems peculiar in this day and age to have to recount what difficulties we went through 25 years ago because now there's no problem and everyone assumes public recreation is open to all.

HESS: We've come a long way in a short time.

DAVIDSON: We sure have.

HESS: What's your opinion of Mr. Truman's general views on the matter of civil rights, a man from rural Jackson County, which really had a Southern flavor when Mr. Truman was growing up?

DAVIDSON: There's no question about where he stood. He had problems but he believed very strongly

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in the Constitution, that "This is the law; how can you discriminate against people," in spite of the fact that we grew up with our prejudices feeling otherwise. When you're in an official position and presented with alternatives, one of which is so clearly right, and the other is just a matter of prejudice and nothing else, one has, in my opinion, no alternative but to buy the proper one and not the one that's based on prejudice; and this is what I think Mr. Truman did. How could he as President of all of the people of the United States say that blacks are not entitled to swim, or play golf, or to eat in a cafeteria, public cafeterias, along with the others? Now, in the private clubs, that question wasn't raised at that time.

HESS: One of the questions that was coming up at that time was D.C.'s restaurants, and the Government lunchrooms. Do you recall those difficulties?

DAVIDSON: Yes I do. I don't think I got so much involved

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with them as with the golf courses. They were run by Government Services, and of course, my responsibility in supervising the parks, the National Capital Parks, threw me right into the swimming pools and golf courses and parks problems. I also ordered the desegregation of the hotels in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park right over here in Virginia, and at that time these decisions were far from popular.

HESS: Could blacks eat in the Government lunchrooms in the Department of Interior here in town?

DAVIDSON: I don't recall whether they could or not. I've forgotten. It was something that I couldn't have done anything about anyway, because Government Services had a contract agency for operating the restaurants with the General Services Administration.

HESS: Did David Niles and Philleo Nash get involved in any of the desegregation matters?

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DAVIDSON: I knew Philleo and Dave both very well, but I do not recall their taking an active part. As a matter of fact, I don't remember whether either one of them were in the room at the time that the President met with the Commissioners, Secretary Krug and myself.

HESS: Do you recall with either one of those gentlemen on other occasions on civil rights matters?

DAVIDSON: Yes. Philleo used to be particularly interested in the Indians, and down in Navajo...

HESS: He later became...

DAVIDSON: ...Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and at that point, I think the only two states were Mexico and Arizona, which did not allow Indians to vote, and we worked hard to try to get that changed.

HESS: Regarding your views on the rights of Government employees, we'll want to discuss the matter of the

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letter that you wrote, and Donald Dawson's memo. Why did you become interested in that matter? First, if you would, just briefly, state the problems, and then why did you become interested in the matter?

DAVIDSON: First, this was the time of the Joe McCarthy days. Do you remember his time?

HESS: This was a little earlier than the Joe McCarthy era, I think wasn't it?

DAVIDSON: Was it earlier? This was at the beginning of it. When did McCarthy come in?

HESS: I think his speech in Wheeling, Virginia, when he said there were "X" number of Communists or Communist sympathizers in the State Department, if I am not mistaken, was in 1950.

DAVIDSON: 1950? Well, in any event, he became the epitome of a witch hunt, but prior to that time, there had been people over on the Hill talking

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about Communists in Government, that had to be weeded out. .And of course, since a Democratic administration was in power, many Republicans were always preaching this kind of philosophy, that we had to get rid of subversives in Government. I certainly felt strongly that any subversive should not be working for the Government and should be taken off of the Government payroll; but I also felt that just because somebody's grandmother thought she heard somebody say that this guy was a subversive did not mean he was; and I didn't feel that this justified somebody starting a complete investigation, turning it over to the FBI and letting them go to every place that the person had lived for the past ten or fifteen years, talking to his neighbors, and asking who he associated with, invading his private life, and discussing this matter with everyone they could find.

When someone's loyalty to the Government is questioned, particularly when he is going to be

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working for the Government, I think a common reaction is "Gee, I didn't know there was anything wrong with him, but if there's smoke there might be some fire." Under FBI procedure at that time (and I don't know whether it is any different today), after a widespread investigation was made, none of the people who were ever interviewed by the FBI were ever notified that the person was cleared or obtained the job. They never knew what had been found out about the person under scrutiny. The question in their minds raised by the questions relating to one's

loyalty remained with no refutation. If one being interviewed did make some derogatory statements about the individual under scrutiny, these could be taken as fact by the reviewing agency, since there was no chance of cross-examining the person; no opportunity to find whether the person giving the testimony was the old enemy "X" of the person he was talking about or any test of his credibility at all. And I felt that this was not consonant with American civil rights and procedures, that anybody who was accused or suspected of being

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disloyal to his government -- and what could be worse than being a subversive.

HESS: Someone out to overthrow the Government.

DAVIDSON: Yes! What could be a more serious charge. It is one of the worst charges that could be levied against an individual, and somehow he ought to have the opportunity to defend himself; under the Government's loyalty program he had no such right and this was one of the principal changes in the loyalty program that I wanted to make.

HESS: And was this the time that you sent the letter to Clark Clifford?

DAVIDSON: Yes.

HESS: We can't find the copy of it. We should say for the record that we have looked in the files of the Truman Library and cannot find this particular letter.

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DAVIDSON: I wonder if it's in the Archives of the United States?

HESS: It could be.

DAVIDSON: It could be at the Archives.

HESS: At the Library, in file 252-K, which is the Loyalty File, we have a memo from Clark Clifford to Donald Dawson dated December 31, 1947, transmitting your letter and saying, "I shall appreciate having your comments on this letter and your advice as to how I should reply," plus the three-page reply to Donald Dawson.

DAVIDSON: Does it give the date of my letter?

HESS: No, it does not. It says: "Jebby Davidson has sent me a letter relating to employee loyalty which I am passing on to you."

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DAVIDSON: Well, I'll tell you, the reason I wrote to Clark was because at that time we were seeing each other every Monday at these little meetings that we held at Oscar Ewing's apartment. I felt very close to Clark, that I could talk to him about anything I wanted to, and I felt very strongly on this issue, so I wrote him a personal letter. Now, I was amazed when a week or ten

days later, I got a call from Jimmy Wechsler of the *New York Post* saying that he understood that I had written a letter to somebody at the White House.

I said, "Where did that come from?"

He said, "I'm not going to disclose my source." Maybe he will now. I'd be very interested in finding out where it came from, because it could have come from several sources.

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The FBI was not happy about my public speeches, and I had debated one of their assistant directors on this issue. I remember I was horrified when he said during this debate that one of the criteria the FBI used in a loyalty investigation was whether the Government employee associated with a person of a different color. Just because one was walking down the street with a black was enough to put this whole machinery of an FBI investigation into gear to determine whether he was a subversive. I said that if they had any respect for the Bill of Rights of our Constitution such a criterion should be abandoned immediately.

On that letter to Clark, I wish we could find it. I also wish we could find the letters which I used to write Seth Richardson of the Loyalty Board. I see we've got his reply, and also a copy of the letter which I started to write him but then somebody told me I had probably written enough so I didn't send it. It

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was at that time, you'll recall, that the *Times-Herald* wrote an editorial saying I should be fired for questioning any part of the President's Loyalty Program. Then the *Washington Post* wrote one coming to my defense. I think you've got that marked wrong. [referring to Scrap Book] That's from the *Washington Post*. This is from the *Times-Herald*. This is the *Star* editorial. You don't have the one in the *Times-Herald*. I think it's in my scrapbook somewhere. It just said that the President should waste no time in getting rid of me.

HESS: Was it your view that the Department of the Interior should be allowed to send their own investigators out to try to find the accusers, is that correct?

DAVIDSON: That is the way my position appeared publicly. I did not feel that it necessarily should be the Department of Interior doing it. I felt that there ought to be some way that an individual's rights could be protected, because he could never find out anything that was in the

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FBI file concerning him, and I've seen hundreds of their files on individuals. That raw file of questionable evidence would be turned over to a loyalty board in the Department. There might have been some better and faster way of doing the checking, but if not, we should have, at least, allowed each loyalty board to make an independent investigation to get to the heart of the matter and really find out something about the employee in question, rather than having to rely solely on this undocumented hearsay evidence which found its way into the FBI dossiers.

HESS: According to Dawson's memo and to a couple of the clippings, there was some question about whether or not Secretary Krug saw your letter before you sent it to Clark Clifford. What do you recall about that?

DAVIDSON: Well, I don't recall showing the actual letter to Krug, but I did discuss the matter with Krug and told him that these were my

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feelings and I was going to write to Clark. Now, I was going to do it on a personal basis and...

HESS: Not as Assistant Secretary?

DAVIDSON: ...not as Assistant Secretary. Cap knew that I was going to these Monday evening meetings, that I was seeing Clark all the time, and he knew that he was Special Counsel to the President, and he knew I felt strongly about this. And I never expected this letter to become public. And I suppose, in anything you wrote, you've got to assume it's going to become public. I didn't know whether it was the FBI itself that leaked the letter, or somebody who obviously wanted to get me. It was one that did.

HESS: Did you discuss this particular subject at any of the Monday night meetings at the Wardman Park? Do you recall?

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DAVIDSON: I do not recall it as such. I'm sure we did, because at those Wardman Park meetings we used to discuss everything, anything that popped into one's head, about what was going on in the Government; what was not good or things that one thought could be improved.

HESS: As you will recall, the subject of loyalty investigations was an important one after the Second World War, and trying to ferret out subversives. The President's Temporary Commission on Employee Loyalty was established in 1946. The chairman was A. Devitt Vanech of the Department of Justice. The Department of Interior did not have a representative on that Commission. They weren't the only department who didn't, but they were not represented. Do you think that the Department of Interior should have been represented, and do you recall anything about that Commission?

DAVIDSON: Very little. I knew Devitt Vanech. He

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was an Assistant Attorney General or something of that kind. I felt that the Department of Justice was buying what the FBI said, and I guess I also had the feeling that they didn't want anybody on their commission or committee who was going to upset the applecart. They probably felt that if they did put anybody from Interior on it, since I'd been the one shooting off my mouth on the subject, I would be appointed and they'd just as soon not have that since I would undoubtedly have questioned some of their basic procedures.

HESS: In one of the clippings in your scrapbook I found that the Labor Department had said that if in such investigations, if the accuser was a Federal employee they were going to give the accused person the right to face their accuser. Do you recall anything about that?

DAVIDSON: No, I do not.

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HESS: That clipping is in here some place. You seemed to be the person in the Interior who was pushing this matter. Do you recall anyone in the Department of Labor at this time who may have been interested in loyalty investigations?

DAVIDSON: As I recall Dave [David A.] Morse, who was Under Secretary of Labor, and who came to the Monday night meetings, was one of the ones who felt this same way about it. The Labor Department was about the only department in Truman's administration, other than Interior where the Secretary was a liberal and let us fight for these liberal positions. I've forgotten who the Secretary of Labor was at this time.

HESS: [Lewis B.] Schwellenbach had died in mid-1948 and then [Maurice T.] Tobin took over.

DAVIDSON: But as you know, the balance of the Secretaries were very conservative individuals: Snyder in Treasury, Sawyer in Commerce, Forrestal of Defense and I think this is what made that

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little group, working through Charlie Murphy and Clark Clifford, so important.

HESS: Were there times that you felt yourself, perhaps, at loggerheads with some of the people you have just mentioned, some of the more conservative people in the Truman administration: Mr. Snyder at Treasury?

DAVIDSON: A great many occasions, not just at times.

HESS: Tell me about an occasion or two.

DAVIDSON: Well, I think that I mentioned that one of the bureaus that I supervised was the Oil and Gas Division of the Department of Interior. I remember that there was a shortage of fuel for our preparedness program at that time, and the reason that the petroleum men gave me was that they could not get steel pipe; it was impossible. I said, "Why?"

They said, "Because pipe is not being allocated to the oil industry." It was being allocated

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through a steel industry advisory committee in the Department of Commerce handled by Sawyer. He presided. And these steel moguls were refusing to expand capacity but were merely allocating their product. They said that they just weren't going to expand. At this point, Sawyer and I used to have head-on arguments on this subject. I wanted more steel so that more oil could

be produced, and he was, in effect, representing the steel companies in their, "Just take it easy, we're going to wait until we are sure the demand gets there and we might pick up a little bit." The demand was there.

HESS: Mr. Sawyer makes a reference to you in his new book.

DAVIDSON: He does?

HESS: *Concerns of a Conservative Democrat*, on page 209:

Unfortunately, some enthusiastic government officials were demanding production

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far beyond what was reasonable or possible. I recall particularly Assistant Secretary C. Girard Davidson of the Department of the Interior. He had a definite anti-business attitude and continually insisted that I force the steel people to increase their output.

Do you think you have a "definite anti-business attitude?"

DAVIDSON: I certainly do not and did not. The steel companies could have made more money if they would have produced more steel but they were afraid or too conservative to expand. The trouble was they were holding down the whole economy by refusing to even use all of their existing facilities. I remember I made a speech somewhere in the Midwest or perhaps out in Spokane, and I said, one, that "The steel companies should go on and use all of their capacity, and if that's not meeting the need, they should build new capacity. If they can't finance it themselves, then the RFC should finance it. If the steel companies refuse to take the RFC financing, and still refuse to expand

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capacity to meet the needs of this country, for this basic commodity, then the Government, as a last resort, should step in, and build steel plants themselves."

Well, then when I said that, of course, all hell broke loose; *Iron and Steel News*, the steel companies and conservatives said that this was just awful.

HESS: Socialism.

DAVIDSON: Socialism. Talking about the Government getting into the steel business was "socialism." I said, "Look, if you take care of the country's needs this is fine; but if you refuse to do this with such a basic commodity as steel, it has to be provided by someone and that means the Government." Well, I remember very well, I got a call from Clark Clifford over at the White House a few days later. I was sitting at my desk and Clark called me and said, "Jebby, I understand you made a speech somewhere out West on steel."

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I thought, "Here it's coming. Here it's coming."

HESS: You were going to be drug off to trial again.

DAVIDSON: And I said, "Yes, Clark, I'm afraid that's right."

He said, "I think in that speech you said that the Government ought to build steel plants?"

I said, "Clark, that's basically right. These steel guys are giving us an awful tough time." I figured I had had it; that Sawyer or some of the others had gotten to the President.

He said, "Would you send me a copy of that speech?"

I said, "Okay, I will."

He said, "I guess you're curious as to how we heard about it?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "Well, Walter Reuther called the President and told him about this speech; said it was great and the President is wondering what you said. Can you get it right over?"

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Obviously, I was extremely happy about this turn of events. It was about a month later that the President made his State of the Union speech to the Congress and said, "If the steel companies do not expand their capacity to meet the country's need, it may be necessary for the Government to do so." Shortly thereafter the steel companies began a large-scale expansion program.

HESS: Do you think that's one of the most important contributions that you may have given to a presidential address?

DAVIDSON: I would not say it is the most important contribution, but it was one that probably gave me as much satisfaction as anything else. When you started with an idea and it was fought by the steel companies and a Cabinet officer and you won, obviously you had a sense of accomplishment. Sawyer was fit to be tied but he couldn't

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fire me. He'd have to go through the President, and Cap was more or less defending me then. In addition, the close association with the little group around Oscar Ewing made one feel that he was not completely isolated. Even though one was taking on a Cabinet officer, he could feel that due to our Monday night group the Cabinet members were not having any more influence with President Truman than we were. Obviously, I don't think this steel episode anyway compares with material we got the President to send over to the Congress in his civil rights message. That, to me, was the greatest.

HESS: You felt that you had as much input into the President's thinking as the Cabinet?

DAVIDSON: Yes.

HESS: Could you have had a little more than some others?

DAVIDSON: It is very hard to answer that question,

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because we as individuals did not. I mean, I didn't see the President except a very few times. I don't know how much the others -- I'm sure John Thurston and Dave Kingsley and Dave Morse, and probably others, didn't see the President any more than I did -- our method of getting to the President was through Clark Clifford and his assistant, Charlie Murphy.

HESS: He was the point of contact?

DAVIDSON: He was the point of contact.

HESS: And Charlie Murphy?

DAVIDSON: And Charlie Murphy, who succeeded Clark Clifford. They were both at these sessions every Monday night when problems would be discussed, kicked around. And we wouldn't know on a number of occasions what Clark was really going to say. All of us were arguing our point of view. Clark was pretty good about keeping his mouth shut, but

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every now and then he would come out with what he thought and what did we think of this tack. He had a sounding board, because all of us had our ideas.

HESS: Just one question on steel production before we go further into the Wardman Park group. What is your general opinion of the condition that the economy might be in today if we had, at that time, back during the late forties and early fifties established some Government-owned steel mills? Would we be in better shape?

DAVIDSON: Oh, I think that would be a debatable question. At the time I was turned down by the steel makers, some of the news stories said that the treatment I had received when appearing before the Industry Committee requesting additional oil pipe was not the way for industry to treat a Government official. This was before the election, shortly before, and the industry was

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confident that they were not going to have to bother with Truman's administration anymore. Dewey was a walk-in. And anybody then in Government they were happy to insult. After the election, when they found the President's message to Congress adopted my position, there was a complete reversal and the industry went to work increasing capacity fast.

HESS: So there was no need for pressing the point.

DAVIDSON: No. They originally just said, "Go to hell." Then the President gets re-elected, the necessity of additional steel capacity goes into his first message to Congress, and, bang, they just started building because they were afraid the new plants might be built by the Government. They decided that the best way to do it was to build themselves.

HESS: Let's go back to the beginning of the Wardman Park group and cover a few basic questions:

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When was it established, why was it established, and who were the original members?

DAVIDSON: Gee, I can't remember the dates. It seems to me that we worked for about a year before the '48 election. I think there were a number of people around Government, who were unhappy with the advice that the President was getting from the majority of his Cabinet. We felt that our little group constituted the "Liberal wing versus the old timers and the conservatives in the Cabinet." Jack Ewing, Oscar Ewing, was the head of the group and Oscar was not only head of HEW at that time, he was vice-chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

HESS: It was the Federal Security Agency way back in those days, which we now know as HEW.

DAVIDSON: It was long before it became a Cabinet office. But anyway, Jack became very worried, and Howard McGrath, Chairman of the Democratic

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National Committee, was also worried about the campaign and where the President was going. The members of the group included Clark Clifford and Charles Murphy. They were our pipeline into the White House. Leon Keyserling, who was then on the Council of Economic Advisers...

HESS: He was vice-chairman.

DAVIDSON: He was vice-chairman, he was not chairman. Charlie Brannan, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture; Dave Morse, Under Secretary of Labor; Donald Kingsley, who was Jack Ewing's first assistant, and John Thurston, who was his second assistant. Since Jack Ewing was heading up the group both from the Federal Security Agency, and as vice-chairman of the Democratic National Committee, we felt it was proper for him to have two people there all the time. They gave an input just like everyone else. Let's see, also Wayne Coy, who had been with President Roosevelt, and Wayne was

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then a Federal Communications Commissioner.

HESS: Did J. Howard McGrath attend most of the meetings?

DAVIDSON: I'd say that he got to about half the meetings, and he would come in at times when we were discussing a particularly tough problem such as the recognition of Israel -- that spread over three or four meetings.

HESS: What were his views on that?

DAVIDSON: He felt Israel should be recognized as all of us did. I think this was unanimous on the part of all of us.

HESS: What were the main reasons put forward for the recognition of Israel?

DAVIDSON: Well, it was the humanitarian thing to do. There was a country that had been established and would allow Jews to move from Germany, which no other country -- including the United States --

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would do. When all other places discriminated against them they set up their own state. And then from a purely political standpoint, we felt this would be one way of helping to solidify the Jewish vote and assistance.

I certainly remember the difficulties we had with the State Department. I don't think the State Department has changed yet. It is still Arab-oriented, and certainly was at that time. We discussed the recognition of Israel at long length and it got to the President. He decided to recognize Israel, and he sent word over to the State Department. Who was the Under Secretary of State then? I can't remember. George Marshall was Secretary. Anyway, Israel just didn't get recognized, so two weeks later, I think it was, the matter again came up at the meeting, and we all said, "What's happened?"

HESS: Robert Lovett was Under Secretary for a while.

DAVIDSON: He might have been. But it was not done.

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The recognition went back to the President; the President got hold of the State Department again, started it through, and the recognition still didn't come out. A story goes (I don't know whether it's accurate or not), that finally, the third time President Truman called he said, "Get me George Marshall." He found him down in Florida someplace, and said, "George, three times now I've said to recognize Israel. Now, that is my decision; you go do it, and if not, I'm going to fire you if you don't do it." Well, then Israel was recognized.

HESS: He spoke that frankly to General Marshall?

DAVIDSON: That's what the story says. I wasn't there, but I understood that he spoke that frankly, and it took that to get the State Department to do it. I still feel the State Department, even today, is pro-Arab and anti-Israel, has been all along, and that was one of the clearest

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demonstrations. But I think it took about that kind of language. I think you ought to check this sometime with Clark or Charlie or some of the rest of them.

HESS: Why do they seem to have that view, because of pro-oil views, or because they were the same views that the British had had for quite some time?

DAVIDSON: Well, I don't know. It seems to me that it's been this Government's policy for a number of years to support Israel. Even Nixon is supposed to be doing it. But the Arab -- or Middle East -- desk has always seemed to have a great deal of muscle.

HESS: Back to the participants: Who did the choosing, how were the people selected?

DAVIDSON: Have I forgotten any of them? I don't think so.

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HESS: I don't think so. I think we've gone over most of them. Now, in your scrapbooks I have found notations where Wayne Coy, J. Howard McGrath and John Thurston were members.

DAVIDSON: I don't think that's in the scrapbooks. That's in the files.

HESS: Over here?

DAVIDSON: Because I don't think this group ever got any publicity, or very little, until Phillips wrote his book, *The Truman Presidency*.

HESS: That's right. That's in your files marked "Civil Rights," and has to do with the memo that you prepared on civil rights and sent around to the members. This is a good thing to discuss next. But I did want to mention that Thurston, McGrath, and Wayne Coy are not listed as being members in Cabell Phillips' book, *The Truman Presidency*, correct?

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DAVIDSON: Yes, Brannan was not mentioned either in Phillips' book. Brannan was at practically every meeting. It was only when we were out of town that we didn't go to the meetings. This we had as number one on our schedules. If we could possibly make those Monday night meetings we did.

HESS: In making your selection were you looking for liberals?

DAVIDSON: I have no idea how the people were selected. When I went to the meetings there was this group. Oscar had us over for dinner at his apartment. Have you interviewed Jack?

HESS: He has been interviewed. I did not interview him, but he has been interviewed.

DAVIDSON: Well, I had a letter from his son the other day, and I'd like to find out. It's a good question. I'll try to find out what basis he

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had for getting us there, because I just don't know. My assistant, Dan [Daniel L.] Goldy, told me that he was a very close friend of Kingsley's, and when Kingsley was talking about this, he suggested that since I traveled the West a great deal, I could make some good input. That might have been the basis for it -- I just don't know.

HESS: All right, now one of the items in this folder is a memo on civil rights. This is a memo that you sent around to Clifford, Morse, Keyserling, Ewing, Brannan, Thurston, McGrath, and Coy. You say, "You will recall that last Monday I was asked to compile that recommendations of the President's Committee on Civil Rights. The attached compilation includes all the recommendations of the President's Committee and I have tried to put them down in groups so that they will be easier to consider. I hope you have a chance to go over this before our next discussion." The first thing that I thought of when I saw that was, was this done very

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often, to have a memo sent around for consideration by people before the meeting on the following Monday night? I had never heard of this being done for the Monday night meetings.

DAVIDSON: I really had forgotten about this until it appeared in my file. This refreshed my recollection. We used to take up subjects at various meetings and say what we were going to talk about at future meetings. But a written memorandum was much more the exception than the rule and I don't remember any others. And you will note from this memorandum to the members of the group which was discussed at a Monday night meeting one may see how the President's message on civil rights got under way.

HESS: February 2, 1948, the ten points message?

DAVIDSON: Right, and you can take a paragraph from this memorandum and see precisely where it ends up in the message. This document, of course,

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comes from...

HESS: This you took mainly, I think, from the civil rights report that was transmitted to the President in October, the one that was called "To Secure These Rights."

DAVIDSON: Right. And then I broke it down into what could be done by executive action, what could be done by congressional action, and then what states should do. Then the President did one of the things that was suggested, "Issuance by the President a mandate against discrimination in Government employment, and the creation of adequate machinery to enforce this mandate." The action which he said in the message he had taken follows closely the executive action which we recommended and which initially came from his Commission. Then, also, the memorandum and the message set forth clearly what he was asking Congress to do. They didn't do it, of course. This message was February 2, 1948, and was before the election.

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For example, he says:

Under the authority of existing law, the Executive branch is taking every possible action to improve the enforcement of the civil rights statutes and to eliminate discrimination in Federal employment, and in providing Federal services and facilities, and in the armed forces.

This was one of the great problems. I think the only way this part of the interview can be readily understood is to attach a copy of that memorandum.

HESS: All right. Now was this a conduit, a channel, for the views that originated in the Monday night meetings, to go through Clark Clifford and end up in the Presidents message? Is it that clear a channel?

DAVIDSON: It happened to be in this instance.

HESS: It worked this time.

DAVIDSON: It worked this time. But these items which I presented in this memorandum were more or less from the Civil Rights Commission Report, and

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our Monday night, group became a convenient panel to get the President to implement the recommendations.

HESS: The Civil Rights Commission Report of October of 1947. That came first and then you distilled it?

DAVIDSON: Yes, and you will find pretty near the same language in the message. Well, I would assume that would be normal, because this document was in the hands of Charlie Murphy and Clark...

HESS: At the time they were writing the message of February 2nd.

DAVIDSON: At the time.

HESS: Did you personally sit down and help him go over the drafts of the President's message of February 2, 1948?

DAVIDSON: No, those were probably done by Dave Bell,

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or some of the guys in the White House. But having this...

HESS: They did have good ideas.

DAVIDSON: You can see the identical language. I have noted here, for example, number 12 of the memorandum says: "The enactment by Congress of legislation establishing a local self-government in the District of Columbia." These are the exact words in his message. His message is a much more rounded presentation. If you want further examples, he says: "3. The enactment by Congress of an anti-lynching act..." This corresponds to 6 under "Congressional Action." His message states: "I recommend therefore that the Congress enact legislation directed toward the following specific objectives: Establishing a permanent Commission on Civil Rights, a Joint Congressional Committee on Civil Rights, and a Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice." Item 1 of our memorandum stated: "The Civil Rights

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Section of the Department of Justice should be given a substantial increase in appropriations, raised to a full division status in the Department and granted increased authority," etc. Now, when he's explaining number 1 a little later in the message he says: "As a first step, we must strengthen the organization of the Federal Government in order to enforce civil rights legislation more adequately and to watch over the state of our traditional liberties. I recommend that the Congress establish a permanent Commission on Civil Rights reporting to the President." This was in Item 26 of the memorandum.

"Protection of the Right to Vote." In his message he said: "Under the Constitution, the right of all properly qualified citizens to vote is beyond question, yet the exercise of this right is still subject to interference. Some individuals are prevented from voting by isolated acts of intimidation. Some whole groups are prevented

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by outmoded policies prevailing in certain states or communities." This follows memorandum numbers 9, 10, and 11.

These sections were more or less lifted and worked into the message, but we did not take credit for these. We were instrumental in getting them put down, putting them in more succinct form. Clark sold it to him.

HESS: Taking the ideas of the Commission from the report, selling them to him and seeing that they got into the message.

DAVIDSON: Yes -- and this was one of the messages which was sent over to the Congress and they did not enact the legislation. So the President went out and told the people what the 80th Congress did not do for civil rights.

HESS: His Commission came out in October with the report, "To Secure These Rights," and he came out in February with a strong message to Congress,

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his ten-point message; just as an opinion, but how much of this do you think was politics in view of the 1948 election coming up and trying to secure the Negro vote?

DAVIDSON: The timing I would certainly say was political -- sending this message over when he did. As I indicated earlier in the discussion of the swimming pools, I don't think there's anything in the message that the President didn't believe in strongly. He felt that something should be done, and he used this occasion to throw it to Congress and say, "Do something about it." They didn't do anything about it, and this is one of the reasons he was re-elected. Because then he would have another chance to do something about civil rights, and I think he and the subsequent Democratic Presidents did a great deal.

HESS: It's about 4:30, and we're all out of tape. Shall we quit for the day?

DAVIDSON: Sure.

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Second Oral History Interview with C. Girard Davidson, Washington, D.C. on

18, 1972. By Jerry N. Hess,

Harry S. Truman Library.

HESS: Mr. Davidson, when we left off yesterday, we were discussing the Wardman Park group, and before we began this morning we went through a number of your scrapbooks and files looking at some items of particular interest. One of the clippings that we just looked at mentioned the Monday night meetings and listed a number of people who were present at those meetings. The first two on the list here are George Allen and Sam Rosenman. Were they ever in attendance?

DAVIDSON: No. Neither one of them ever attended one of the Monday night meetings according to my recollection, at least none that I attended. We tried to make it a point to be at all of the meetings that we possibly could, but, of course, sometimes we were out of town and they may have come to one when I was away.

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HESS: Bill Batt, Jr. was also mentioned. Did he attend?

DAVIDSON: Well, Bill Batt was chairman of the Research Division of the Democratic National Committee, and I think on one or two occasions Bill did come to the meetings to explain the results of some of the research projects which he had carried on.

HESS: One other point of interest I found in the clipping mentioned that a bill for \$150 for the food that evening was sent to the Democratic National Committee. Was that a common practice?

DAVIDSON: Well, I was under the impression that we were meeting at the behest of the Democratic National Committee to assist in Truman's '48 campaign, and therefore I was under the impression that the dinners were paid for by the Committee. I think Howard McGrath, Jack Ewing, and the others who were running the Committee, did not like the type

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of advice that the President was getting from some of his Cabinet officers to try to outdo Dewey in being conservative, and this whole idea of giving the 70th Congress hell, I think, really came from this little Monday night group and was strongly supported by both Howard McGrath and Jack Ewing.

HESS: I found a clipping in your scrapbooks that said the idea of making the 80th Congress a political target came from you, personally, and came a year in advance of the campaign. Do you recall anything about that?

DAVIDSON: No, I really don't. I thought the 80th Congress was a good target, and one that should be attacked, but the way this got to the President, I'm sure, was from our Monday night group via Clark Clifford. I don't want to take any more credit for doing that than anybody else.

HESS: What made you think that the 80th Congress would

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be a good target, what made it look like they were susceptible?

DAVIDSON: Because it had turned down all progressive domestic issues; it had done absolutely nothing to help the unemployment situation; it did nothing about wage and price controls, and both wages and prices were running rampant. And I think that the 80th Congress' failure to act on the President's proposal made them a natural target.

HESS: Now in the foreign field they weren't so uncooperative, as has been said. What Mr. Truman will be known for in history are the Greek-Turkish aid bill, the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall plan, and those were passed by the 80th Congress. In elections, when there is no shooting going on, are domestic considerations more important than foreign considerations?

DAVIDSON: I think that's right. I think times have changed considerably from 1948 to today. Obviously,

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today foreign policy and what's going on in Vietnam is of equal if not more importance in the forthcoming election than domestic policy, but that was not the attitude of the country back in '48.

HESS: To digress just a little bit, you mentioned that Bill Batt attended some of the meetings, and that he was head of the Research Division of the Democratic National Committee. That was set up about in June, 1948. Various people served on it: Johannes Hoeber was one, Philip Dreyer also. Was he from Oregon?

DAVIDSON: Yes.

HESS: Did you have occasion to work with the Research Division?

DAVIDSON: Yes, I did. I used to work with them a good deal and would supply them with information in the power and the resource field, and in other fields. Bill Batt did an outstanding job as

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chairman of that group, and he had some very bright young fellows working with him.

HESS: Dave Lloyd, also.

DAVIDSON: David Lloyd worked with Batt. You must remember, at that time, nobody expected the President to get reelected. The Democratic National Committee was broke; it did not have a large staff, and it just couldn't get its work done. These were dedicated individuals that helped a great deal. This little group of Bill Batt's became the forerunner of the Democratic Advisory Council, which was strongest in Paul Butler's administration of the National Committee. If you recall, Adlai Stevenson was chairman of that group, and when I was chairman of the Western States Democratic Conference I fought hard to maintain the Advisory Council in order to get research done, and this was over the objection of the people on the Hill. Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Johnson felt that the Democrats on the

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Hill should determine party policy, and some of us felt that this was too conservative a policy to represent the party.

HESS: Did you attend any of the Democratic Advisory Council meetings, that were held across the street in the LaSalle Building?

DAVIDSON: I was chairman of the Natural Resources Committee of the Democratic National Committee. You may remember that Mrs. Roosevelt was chairman of the Committee on Civil Rights, Dean Acheson on Foreign Policy, and I had Natural Resources. "Resources for the People", was the name of the publication which finally came out from my section and it lists the Governors, Senators, and others who were members of the committee. Rachael Carson, I remember, was a member of my committee. We had a number of sessions before we put that document together which was printed and used in the Jack Kennedy campaign.

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HESS: After you had had your meetings and developed your material, just how did you try to put it into effect? Through the report?

DAVIDSON: Through the report "Resources for the people." Donald Balmer, a professor of political science at Lewis and Clark College, was the executive director of this committee, and he did a great deal of the writing himself. The two of us worked with the platform committee in Los Angeles when Kennedy was nominated. Our Natural Resources Committee had a great deal of input into the resources section of the platform adopted at the Los Angeles convention.

HESS: Did you know that Mr. Charles Tyroler still has that suite of offices in the LaSalle Building? He was the executive secretary of the Council.

DAVIDSON: Yes, we worked a great deal with him.

HESS: Not for the Council. He's off on other pursuits, but he's still in that suite of offices.

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DAVIDSON: That type of work is essential if you're going to properly analyze the issues and the opposition. I've always believed in that type of staff work.

HESS: In 1948 the Research Division was used mainly as backup on speeches. Isn't that correct? Research for information...

DAVIDSON: Right.

HESS: Research for information to help write the speeches.

DAVIDSON: To help write speeches and to help dig up some of the record of the 80th Congress so that it could be attacked.

HESS: In one of the clippings I found that many of the statements on natural resources that were made by the President when he was in the western part of the United States were your ideas, or came from you. Is that correct?

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DAVIDSON: When you say they came from me, I may have been the spokesman, because I made a lot of speeches, but I had a great staff at Interior. When Krug became Secretary and I went in as his Assistant Secretary, our philosophy was completely at variance from the way the Department of the Interior had been handled; from the way Secretary Ickes and Chapman, who had been an Assistant Secretary during that time had handled it. We believed in a more decentralized operation. When we were confirmed all the bureaus were headed up in Washington, D.C., and they had their direct channels out to the field. In the field the bureaus did not communicate with each other, and any coordination was supposed to be handled in Washington. There were no departmental programs in the natural resources field. Each bureau had its own program, and conflicts were not handled in the Department, but very often in the Congress itself.

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We felt that there needed to be some coordination and consolidation of the various functions of the Interior Department inside the Department so that we would not have the Fish and Wildlife Service, for example, going over to the Hill objecting seriously to building a dam when the Bonneville Power Administration and the Bureau of Reclamation were over there arguing that they should build a dam. We felt that it was our responsibility since we had the duty of running these bureaus to try to get some reconciliation of those views before they got over to the Hill. This could not be done without staff help and research. As a result, very shortly after we arrived, we established what was known as a program staff. We brought in Walt [Walton] Seymour, who

had been at TVA as head of the program staff, and Alfred Wolf as his deputy -- this was in the Secretary's office -- to try to help us coordinate the various bureaus.

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We then established in each region a field committee to pull together the various bureaus of the Department so they would at least communicate and discuss their problems at one regional level. And at that time, we put a representative of the Department as head of those field committees to try to consolidate or coordinate those efforts, to try to settle many of these almost irreconcilable conflicts, before the fight came to Washington. If this was impossible, we in Washington would try to settle them before they went over to the Hill. This type of organization was met with a great deal of objection by some of the bureaus who, depending upon their political muscle, would prefer taking their own chances over on the Hill rather than having an objective analysis in the Department that would consider not only the input from the bureaus, but what seemed to be best for the country as a whole.

HESS: Did you have results along that line?

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DAVIDSON: I think we did, but you can understand why the bureaus such as Reclamation, Geological Survey, and the Bureau of Mines, opposed us. The Bureau of Land Management was one of the worst as far as authority being centralized in Washington was concerned, but we finally got in a new director, Marion Clawson, and of course, there was considerable objection to him.

A little sidelight on that. When we came into the Department, Senator [Joseph C.] O'Mahoney, who was chairman of the Interior Committee, had one of his buddies as head of the General Land Office -- I've forgotten his name -- but Joel Wolfsohn, the assistant director, was the one that actually ran it. (We finally combined the Land Office with the Grazing Service and called it in the Bureau of Land Management.) This old man very seldom came to work. He was an alcoholic. He used to keep a bottle of liquor in his desk all the time.

HESS: For when he did come to work?

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DAVIDSON: And he'd just sit there when he did. I was the supervisor of the Bureau of Land Management so I fired him and moved in Marion Clawson, who had been a regional director of BLM out on the West Coast. He was very aggressive, very articulate, and a good man in trying to reorganize the slow-moving operation of the Bureau of Land Management. Some say that this is where the name "red tape" came from, because all of the General Land Office files were tied up in red tape. I think I spent a year, or a year and a half, justifying my action before the Civil Service Commission for the firing of the drunk and appointing Clawson. In Government, one just can't do a thing like that. It would have been much easier to just promote him or put him up somewhere else.

HESS: To kick him upstairs.

DAVIDSON: To kick him upstairs rather than to fire him. But this was one of my experiences of

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trying to get rid of a person and putting somebody else in the job.

HESS: Back to the Wardman Park group. Did Oscar Chapman ever attend any of the meetings?

DAVIDSON: No.

HESS: Why? The reason I mentioned that is that he is usually recognized by many historians as one of the "leading liberals" of the period. Why didn't he attend?

DAVIDSON: In the first place, I don't think he was ever invited to attend one. I'd be very interested in what Jack Ewing has to say about the subject, and why the group that was there was selected. Very few outsiders ever showed up at those meetings. They were not secret meetings, but it was a long time before anybody knew that this group met, and a much longer time before the meetings had any publicity at all. There were no leaks from these meetings.

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HESS: Was it a conscious effort to keep the fact that the meetings were being held out of the press?

DAVIDSON: Certainly. It wasn't anybody else's business that we were meeting. It just never occurred to anybody to discuss it publicly or what we were doing. I think you know Oscar Chapman's reputation of having newspaper friends that he'd leak stories to, and this might have been a reason he was never asked.

HESS: Was there, perhaps, a view among the people who attended that too much emphasis had been made to preserve President Roosevelt's image, and that perhaps a new image, an image for Mr. Truman, needed to be brought to the fore? What I have reference to was in 1946, as you probably will recall, recorded speeches of President Roosevelt were sent around the Nation during the campaign. But was there any thought given by

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the Wardman Park group to the necessity for creating more of a Truman image?

DAVIDSON: Yes, I think Clark Clifford felt rather strongly that the President should have a different public image created than just following the Roosevelt philosophy. He consciously made an attempt to see that this was done and, of course, he was the one closest to the President and had the most influence. All speeches, all public announcements, came through him.

HESS: I'm not sure what we covered yesterday about the political views of some of the people who were at the meetings. Take Donald Kingsley, for instance. What were his political views? And what were his contributions?

DAVIDSON: Well, Don Kingsley was a sociologist. He was very liberal in his views. He was an excellent deputy for Oscar Ewing, because their views coincided, and when Jack was not around to run

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the Federal Security Agency, Don did.

And John Thurston was also present at the meetings. He was either Don Kingsley's assistant or next in command.

In the early days of the Federal Security Administration its direction was very definitely people oriented; they wanted to do everything they could to help the underprivileged to try to get housing, and to improve the quality of education, and to provide a decent standard of living for all. I worked hard to transfer the Bureau of Indian Affairs from Interior over to Health, Education and Welfare. I think Indians ought to be considered as people, not land or a natural resource. However, that became impossible because it so happened that Congressman [W.F.] Norrell of Arkansas, was chairman of the subcommittee for Interior appropriations, and he had an Indian reservation in his district, and any time you'd ever try to move the Bureau you'd hit a stone wall in Congress. I certainly would not have

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been in favor of moving the Indians if I had thought that HEW was in the hands of the wrong kind of people.

HESS: Charles Brannan.

DAVIDSON: Well, Charlie was a faithful attendant at the Monday night meetings, and his forte was agriculture, but the specific specialty of an individual and the Department from which he happened to come, had nothing to do with his discussing any and all issues that came up. I guess we all assumed we were experts because in politics, everyone is expert. Out of the full discussion that occurred we usually arrived at some kind of consensus.

HESS: Just an opinion, what weight do you think would have been given to political expediency, and what weight would have been given to idealism, "We must do this because it's right," by the members who attended? How anxious were you to win the

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election?

DAVIDSON: I think there was no inconsistency in the two, because the idealism which this group had, we felt also made for the best politics. Take civil rights. We certainly had the idealism and what we felt should be done. We also thought it was good politics. On the question of the recognition of Israel, certainly it should have been done from an idealistic standpoint, and it was also good politics. Based on the record of the 80th Congress, we could certainly combine our idealism with practical politics.

HESS: There are other members, but I think we should move on.

Here is a copy of the unsigned memo of June 29, 1948, entitled, "Should the President Call Congress Back," That is a copy of a document that is found in Samuel Rosenman's papers from the White House at the Truman Library, but also I believe there is a copy in Mr. Clifford's papers

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that we have recently received. One thing I'd like for you to note, it sounds like a joint effort. If you'll note the lines:

Here are the objections to the special session planned and the answers as we see them.

The word "we" comes in.

DAVIDSON: Well, but that might have been an editorial we.

HESS: It could have been. Do you know who wrote this memo?

DAVIDSON: No, I do not, and I can't say whether this memorandum, as such, was ever presented at the Monday night meetings. There were very few, as I recall, written documents that came into the meetings. The ideas were discussed; for example, the pluses and minuses of calling the Congress into session. But the specific memorandum I just have no recollection.

HESS: Some authors think that it did come from the

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Wardman Park group. Cabell Phillips writing in *The Truman Presidency* on page 226 says:

Late in June Clifford had put before him in a memorandum from the political strategy board which said, in part...

and then quoted a number of items from this particular memo. But as far as you can remember, you don't know if it came from the Wardman Park group?.

DAVIDSON: Phillips wrote that book quite some time ago, and the recollections of the people themselves may have been better then. This may have come as a result of the discussion. Charlie Murphy may have written it and presented it to Clark; or something of that sort.

HESS: Moving on from the Oscar Ewing group, or the Wardman Park group, into the campaign, in the election and the events of 1948, Mr. Truman took a trip out to the West in June of 1948. He went out to the University of California to receive an honorary degree. On his way he stopped up through Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Do you

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recall anything about that?

DAVID SON: Was that the Truman train, when he had the train that was going through the Western States?

HESS: Yes, and that was the time that Robert Taft made reference in Congress to Mr. Truman stopping at every "whistlestop." So a new word was added to the political vocabulary.

DAVIDSON: Yes, I certainly do. I remember there was a great deal of work done getting ready for that trip. I joined the train, it seems to me, around Kalispell, Montana, somewhere around in there, where he hit the Pacific Northwest, which, as you know, was my assigned bailiwick in the Department of Interior. I knew the people in western Montana, Washington, Oregon and Idaho. At that time, I remember Charlie Murphy and Dave Bell. I think Dave Bell worked out basic speech drafts. By that time, I assume they must have had ten or fifteen speeches, and they were more

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or less running out of material. It seems to me that the President dedicated a dam out there at that time. That speech was pretty well under control, but I worked with Bell and Murphy on the train getting ready for some of the WhistleStop and the local color.

HESS: He stopped by Grand Coulee Dam on this trip, but if I recall correctly, the time that they had a rededication of Grand Coulee Dam was in 1950.

DAVIDSON: He did not rededicate Grand Coulee on this campaign trip. It seems to me it was one in Montana, a smaller dam.

HESS: But was the June trip regarded as a tune-up for the campaign? A shakedown cruise?

DAVIDSON: I think that trip left the President very enthusiastic about his campaign. It was on that trip when someone yelled, "Give 'em hell Harry." He was watching the crowds at the back of the train. I remember the enthusiastic response he was getting.

Of course, the pollsters and the columnists and everybody said that this was so much of an uphill

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battle that he couldn't possibly make it, and even though he jarred the West -- I think our little group felt the same way -- that he couldn't make it.

HESS: You felt he was fighting a hopeless battle, but still fighting.

DAVIDSON: But still fighting, and therefore, we were going to fight too.

HESS: This was in June of 1948. The convention was held in Philadelphia the following month in July of 1948. During that period of time before the convention, there were movements afoot to see that someone other than Mr. Truman was the standard-bearer of the Democratic Party during that campaign. One of the leading movements, one of the most vigorous movements, was by the

ADA. What do you recall about that, as you were a member of the ADA? When did you join the ADA?

DAVIDSON: It was around that time, or possibly earlier.

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I think I may have joined it in Oregon before I came here, because Monroe Sweetland was a very active member of the ADA, and he was a close friend of mine. After I got back here and Hubert Humphrey was in the middle of it, I joined about then. At this point, I believe it was -- I've forgotten who was head of the ADA but...

HESS: Leon Henderson.

DAVIDSON: Well, I didn't know Leon as well as some of the other people, but the feeling was that President Truman was going to get licked, and they were looking hard for somebody who they felt might be able to win the election. I think at that time General Eisenhower was one of their candidates, and they promoted him.

HESS: They certainly did. In your scrapbooks, we have a press release by the ADA in which they mention they would like to have a candidate like the following: General Eisenhower or William

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Douglas, Supreme Court Justice Douglas. They didn't specifically say, "We want these men," but they said, "We would like a candidate like this." What do you think that the ADA knew about General Eisenhower's political stands at that time?

DAVIDSON: I think they knew nothing at all. He was just a public figure, and he, at that point, hadn't declared himself either a Republican or a Democrat, and they felt that he might turn out to be liberal, I think.

HESS: Isn't it strange for an organization that places such great weight on idealism to promote a man whose ideals they knew absolutely nothing about?

DAVIDSON: I agree. They certainly should have done some checking. But they didn't. Now, Bill Douglas would have been a different matter completely because his views were known based

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on his opinions in the Supreme Court, and his public utterances. Douglas would have been a logical person for the ADA to support.

HESS: As you will recall, Justice Douglas was Mr. Truman's first choice to run as Vice President on his ticket once he was nominated. What do you recall about that?

DAVIDSON: Well, I felt that Justice Douglas should have taken the spot when it was offered by the President, as Vice President on the ticket. I recall rather vividly that my wife and I were at Capon Springs, West Virginia, with Abe and Carol Fortas, spending the weekend. And while we were there a long distance call came from Bill Douglas to Abe. They were very close friends and had worked with each other a great deal. And Bill phoned Abe and they must have had a half hour or forty-five minute conversation.

There was no phone in the room, there was a pay station, and he had to go over to it.

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And Bill told him that he had been offered the job of Vice President.

I think Abe's feeling was that he should take it, but I don't recall that specifically. I always felt that one of the reasons that Douglas didn't do it was due to his physical location at the time of the call from the President. He was over on the coast of Oregon with Henry Hess, Leland Hess, Latourette and I think some others -- Democrats -- but conservative Democrats in Oregon. They urged that he not give up his position on the United States Supreme Court to run for an office which was going to go down to certain defeat. I think that probably had a good deal of influence on Bill's decision.

HESS: Do you think if he hadn't received that advice he might have given some consideration to joining Mr. Truman on the ticket?

DAVIDSON: I think he might have.

HESS: Have you ever heard him say anything in years

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since then on that matter?

DAVIDSON: No I haven't. Some of these days I'll try to discuss it with him and find out. I think you ought to interview him or Justice Fortas.

HESS: We have written to him and have not received a reply.

DAVIDSON: How about Fortas?

HESS: No.

DAVIDSON: He would remember, because he was very close to Douglas.

HESS: I didn't know of his connection with the matter until now. We'll have to give consideration to him.

All right, the convention was held in Philadelphia. I know that you went. Would you tell me the circumstances surrounding that fact, and then what you recall about the convention in Philadelphia?

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DAVIDSON: Well, to become a delegate to the convention from Oregon you have to run for the office, either statewide or in the district. I did not run for election. The person who was then state chairman of the party, Byron Carney, did run, was elected, and appointed me as his alternate. Since he was not able to take the trip, I attended the convention as the voting delegate. I recall that this was the convention where civil rights was the great issue, and the South walked out. I think that most of the activity around the convention related somewhat to that issue.

HESS: There were two planks offered. One, a so-called milder civil rights plank, and then the one that was put forward by Andrew J. Biemiller, seconded by Hubert Humphrey, and has since become known as the Humphrey-Biemiller Plank. I found a notation that you voted for that stronger Humphrey-Biemiller civil rights plank. Is that correct?

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DAVIDSON: Correct, yes, that's right.

HESS: Why did you vote for that stronger plank, and did you have any knowledge at the time that Mr. Truman may have favored the milder plank?

DAVIDSON: I do not know whether I had any indication about Mr. Truman favoring the milder plank at that time. As I expressed on your tape yesterday, after coming out of the South and my rebirth on the civil rights question, I felt that the Humphrey-Biemiller plank was obviously the one that should be adopted; and also, to revert to the question you asked a little while ago, I thought it was the best politics. I thought that it was best to take a firm stand even though it might mean that the South walked out, because we had indications that some of the states would. We didn't know it would be that many.

HESS: Why did you think it was the best thing to do if the South was going to bolt?

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DAVIDSON: Because what you lose in the South you make it up in the North. You would make it up in the heavily populated states. But I felt that it was the thing that ought to be done, not only as my personal belief, but also as a representative of Oregon, and therefore I voted for it. I don't think we knew at that time how strongly Mr. Truman felt one way or the other on that particular plank. We knew he had been getting advice from the conservative members of his Cabinet, and assumed they were advising that the stronger plank would be terrible, and he should not support it.

HESS: If he did feel that way and was supporting the more moderate civil rights plank, that information was not communicated to you as a delegate?

DAVIDSON: No.

HESS: Do you remember the walkout by the South?

DAVIDSON: Oh, sure.

HESS: Alabama was first, I think, then Mississippi.

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DAVIDSON: We were wondering what was going to happen to Alabama at the Democratic National Convention that I just attended in Miami. Alabama was there taking almost the same stand it did in 1948. Of course, Mississippi now is in the forefront of the liberals -- and this just shows the tremendous change that has taken place in the last twenty to twenty-five years. Southerners are some of the most liberal of the delegations. Of course, in Florida and Alabama, the old time Southerners control the delegations; and it will undoubtedly take awhile for these changes also. I think that this recent convention has been exceptional. Of all of the conventions I've gone to, I think this was the most fascinating and interesting, and I've been to practically all of them since the time that Roosevelt nominated Al Smith in Houston in '28.

HESS: I found a notation in your scrapbooks that you were planning on nominating Helen Gahagan Douglas

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for Vice President, but as I mentioned, I looked through the proceedings of the 1948 convention and can find no indication that she had been placed in nomination. Do you recall anything about that?

DAVIDSON: No, I remember the discussion that we were going to, and I would have been a logical one to either second or place her in nomination, depending on whether there was somebody else better to do it than me.

HESS: Why?

DAVIDSON: Well, because I believed then, and still do, that women do not have a sufficiently prominent place in politics, and Helen Gahagan Douglas was eminently qualified. When I was general counsel at Bonneville I had a larger proportion of women attorneys on the staff than any other agency. When I was Assistant Secretary of Interior two of my assistants were women, and

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at that point, women had not reached the position that they have today in politics.

Helen Gahagan Douglas was an outstanding woman, a very attractive, very articulate person, very progressive, and I thought she would have made a good vice-presidential nominee. Now why we didn't go forward with it, I don't recall, and that's something I'm going to try to find out from Helen.

HESS: You don't recall making a speech for her?

DAVIDSON: I don't recall making a speech, and I'm sure that she was not placed in nomination since you said you checked the record.

HESS: Everything I could find in your scrapbooks was before the event. The ADA was thinking of placing her name in nomination, and then we found a draft of a speech that you had written to either second or make the nomination, but I could find no indication that the nomination was made.

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DAVIDSON: Well, if we have a subsequent interview I'll try to find out what happened.

HESS: What do you recall about Alben Barkley's keynote address, anything in particular?

DAVIDSON: No, I don't. This is one of the problems. It's been so long ago. I imagine there's something in the files.

HESS: I found something in the file that said, "Notes on Keynote Address," and it was sort of a critique of a keynote address, and as you and I both discussed when we hit that awhile ago, you couldn't remember if it was Barkley's or not.

DAVIDSON: I couldn't remember it, and as I said when we started the interviews, I have been trying to get in touch with my assistants who were working with me at that time: Paul Unger, Harriet Margolies, and Dan Goldy. We had a very close working relationship, very little was ever done without a full discussion, and they may have some

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recollections and can refresh my memory on some of these things.

HESS: Mr. Truman did want the nomination, he wanted to be the party standard-bearer again, and as we have mentioned, there were various movements afoot to see that he was replaced. Just how difficult would it be to deny the nomination to an incumbent President?

DAVIDSON: I think it would be impossible, and that was why I paid no attention to the kind of thing that the ADA and the others were talking about, so long as the President wanted to run again. But you will recall it was a long time before he announced that he was going to run.

HESS: Were you contacted by ADA officials or others to get your views on what you thought about Mr. Truman's re-election? You were just a member, correct?

DAVIDSON: I was just a member. I was not on the

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national board.

HESS: It seems rather strange, but one of the members of the national board was Ronald Reagan.

DAVIDSON: That is absolutely fascinating.

HESS: That's what you call a 180 degree change, isn't it?

DAVIDSON: Kind of like Harry Cain. Senator Gruening told me that Senator Harry Cain has had a 180 degree turn. Let's hope that Reagan makes it 180 degrees.

HESS: What do you recall about President Truman's acceptance speech, anything in particular? His acceptance speech was delivered late at night. It was 2 o'clock in the morning. Well, I understand Mr. [George] McGovern's was around 3 o'clock in the morning, so if indeed Mr. Truman did hold the record (I'm not sure that he did), but if he did for delivering an acceptance speech late at night, it's now been broken.

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DAVIDSON: Which shows that the Democratic conventions just do not run on schedule. They can't make the prime time, which they should have.

HESS: In his acceptance speech he called Congress back into special session, his so-called "Turnip Day Speech." That's just what we were discussing with the unsigned memo. But at the time when Mr. Truman mentioned in his speech, "I'm going to call Congress back," was it a surprise to you that he had actually made that decision?

DAVIDSON: No. I think the only surprise was the actual date on which he was going to call Congress back. This came as a surprise.

HESS: From your discussions at the Monday night meetings you thought he would call for a special session?

DAVIDSON: We felt that it was going to happen.

HESS: Do you recall if that decision was cleared with party leaders, and with congressional

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leaders? I'm thinking of Sam Rayburn on the Hill; Barkley at that time, of course, was the Minority Leader in the Senate, correct?

DAVIDSON: I would doubt it. I don't know, but...

HESS: This is very important. Before calling the Congressmen back from all over the United States, wouldn't the President have discussed with the leading Democrats in the House and Senate the reaction to such an action?

DAVIDSON: Well, I don't know that he didn't, but if he didn't -- let me put it this way: The President was a very remarkable man. If he made up his mind that this was the thing to do and decided that he was going to call them back, he might not have gone to the Hill and talked to them, because they would try to talk him out of it, and if they advised against it and he did it anyway, they'd be mad.

HESS: That was something that he wanted to do anyway.

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DAVIDSON: I can understand that if it was something he wanted to do, and it was something decided, that he would just go on and do it and then could say, "Gee, it's too bad. I'm sorry you don't approve, but I've already done it." But he would not have asked for their advice and then refused to take it.

HESS: Do you think that he didn't want to ask their advice?

DAVIDSON: I don't know whether he did or he didn't, but I can certainly understand why he might not have asked for it.

HESS: Just after the convention there were two important Executive orders released: One establishing a Fair Employment Practices Commission in the Federal Government, and the other one concerned with discrimination with the armed services. Do you recall anything about the formulation of those two Executive orders?

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DAVIDSON: That was a part of the complete program -- a part of his civil rights message. You recall that in that message he said that he was taking certain actions for the Executive Department and he was doing those things that were within his power as Chief Executive, and that there were a number of other things which the Congress should do.

HESS: All right, we've mentioned the Executive orders in July. Do you recall anything about their formulation? Now, in the message to Congress of February 2, the President had mentioned that he was going to take certain action. He also at that time mentioned that he was going to issue some Executive orders. The Executive orders that were formulated at that time were not signed, were not released, until late in July.

DAVIDSON: In July, this is in '48?

HESS: Right after the convention.

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DAVIDSON: Well, let's see, his message was in February, in which he said: "I have instructed the Secretary of Defense to take steps to have the remaining instances of discrimination in the armed services eliminated as rapidly as possible. The personnel practices and policies in this regard will be made consistent..." Now, I assume that several months later his instructions were not being put in effect as fast as he had hoped, and that those two Executive orders came out as a

follow-up. I don't recall specifically whether I had a part in these or not. Did you notice anything in the files?

HESS: No, I did not.

Moving on, what do you recall about the campaign of 1948? I found references in your scrapbook to some speeches you had made out on the West Coast, also tearing into the 80th Congress about the same time President Truman was tearing into them.

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DAVIDSON: Well, I made a number of speeches, as you pointed out. I probably made as many speeches as anybody else around at that time, and of course, after the nomination and after the convention, we were all interested in trying to get the President re-elected. Therefore, I did make speeches every chance I'd get. I wanted to do something about it. I was a presidential appointee and therefore not subject to any of the Hatch Act limitations or anything of that kind. I had a great deal of fun making those speeches, because I was making them to audiences that usually didn't feel that Truman had a chance.

HESS: What could have been done to sway votes in that area? What I have reference to, I saw a notation where you thought that Oregon was going to go Democratic, but it did not. It went for Dewey. What could have been done to swing Oregon into the Democratic column?

DAVIDSON: Well, Oregon is a very difficult state.

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Oregon has not been in the Democratic column except when Goldwater ran against Lyndon Johnson, and again in President Roosevelt's first election. But I think that optimism is a typical expression of politicians before an election.

HESS: You have to say you think you're going to win, whether you think so or not.

DAVIDSON: You have to say you think you're going to win.

HESS: Now the difference was not very great between Truman and Dewey: A 17,757 vote edge for Dewey. So it was fairly close.

DAVIDSON: Very close.

HESS: One other man running in the election, Henry Wallace, got 14,978. That was Wallace's eleventh state as far as the number of votes. Of course, New York was his biggest. He got more votes in New York, and then California was Wallace's

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second, but Oregon was well down on the list.

On the subject of Henry Wallace and his Progressive Party, what effect did you think that that would have on the campaign, and on the election?

DAVIDSON: It would take a lot of votes away from President Truman. I felt that the fact that the South had pulled out would probably help the Republicans.

HESS: Under J. Strom Thurmond and the States' Rights Party.

DAVIDSON: Yes.

HESS: You felt that would help the Republicans?

DAVIDSON: Did Strom Thurmond start a third party at that time?

HESS: He certainly did. It was called the States' Rights Party.

DAVIDSON: How did the votes come out?

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HESS: Governor Fielding Wright was Strom Thurmond's vice-presidential running mate, and Glen Taylor, from out in your area, was the vice-presidential running mate for Henry Wallace. I don't think Thurmond was on the ballot in Oregon.

DAVIDSON: How many states did Strom Thurmond carry?

HESS: Let's see. Thurmond carried Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and he got one electoral vote in Tennessee. Tennessee went eleven for Truman, one for Thurmond. But he carried four states outright and then the one vote from Tennessee.

DAVIDSON: I don't think you could really tell in '48 which candidate Thurmond affected more, because these were all Southern states, and Southern states at that time had never voted anything except Democratic. For them, in '48, to vote Republican would have been quite an upheaval because usually on those ballots you'd stamp the rooster at the top

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and that would carry the whole ticket with them. However, as of today, obviously...

HESS: These votes would have ended up in the Dewey column.

DAVIDSON: This is probably correct.

HESS: Thurmond acted as a lightning rod to pull off conservative and Southern votes that might have gone not to Truman but to Dewey.

DAVIDSON: But there's no question, the Wallace votes would have gone to Truman. The way it worked out, Truman managed to make it in spite of this.

HESS: Wallace's main damage to Mr. Truman was in New York. A little over half a million votes in New York took the 47 electoral votes away from Truman and gave them to Dewey, but it was quite close.

DAVIDSON: Wallace got 509,559.

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HESS: Yes. What do you recall of Glen Taylor, Mr. Wallace's vice-presidential nominee, since he was from the West?

DAVIDSON: Well, Glen Taylor was quite an interesting character. As you know, he was the Senator from Idaho, and because of my interest in the Columbia Valley Authority, I worked closely with him. Of course, Glen was a very ardent advocate of the CVA and I knew him very well. I recall specifically after he had been chosen and was running as Vice President with Wallace, Glen's wife called me and said, "Debby, will you come over and talk to Glen? He is surrounded by a group who will not let any of his old friends talk to him, and they are giving him advice that is very bad. You can talk to him because hers known you for a long time."

I remember I did go over to see Glen and talked to him. But he was way up in the clouds then and he felt everything was wrong with the country, and I obviously could have no effect on him. I think afterwards he realized the error

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of his ways, but I don't know what's happened to him. Where is he? The last I heard of him he was selling wigs in California.

HESS: I didn't know. I hadn't heard.

Did you attend any of the President's stops in the Pacific Northwest during the campaign? Now, we mentioned the June trip where you did get on the train.

DAVIDSON: I was on the train. I was on those stops.

HESS: Did you get on the train any time during the fall campaign?

DAVIDSON: Did that make the same stops?

HESS: Practically.

DAVIDSON: I don't know then which one it was that I was on. I've forgotten at this point, because I think I was on the train only on one of those trips.

HESS: Mr. Truman did visit the Pacific Northwest

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fairly often. He went in June. He went back for the campaign in '48, and then in May of 1950 he went back out up for the rededication of the Grand Coulee Dam. He liked the Oregon, Washington, and Idaho area.

DAVIDSON: I was there for the rededication of Grand Coulee.

HESS: That was in May of 1950. That was the last year that you were in the Interior Department.

Do you recall any particular incidents that might ring a bell and help you to recall if you were with the President during the campaign?

DAVIDSON: This is a picture of Truman, Krug and myself when he was touching the button and turning on the juice? I thought that was at Grand Coulee Dam when he was starting off the second power house. But this was done here at the White House. Now, I do not recall that he rededicated Grand Coulee, but he did.

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HESS: May of '50.

DAVIDSON: I'll have to check my records.

HESS: What seemed to be the prevailing attitude of the people in the Administration, Assistant Secretaries, Under Secretaries and Secretaries, here in town about Mr. Truman's chances for victory?

DAVIDSON: Well, I think Louie Bean was about the only one predicting that the President had a chance. All the pollsters and columnists, and they were supposed to be experts, felt he had no chance. I know I certainly felt it was an uphill battle. I didn't think he was going to be able to make it, although we were working hard. I wouldn't say that the entire Monday night group felt that way, but I would say that the majority felt that he would not make it. I know I was very surprised. I went out to Oregon the day after the election. I took the plane that morning. The final returns were not in, and I'd get off at every stop and

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listen to Kaltenborn saying, "Just wait until the rural returns come in and it will change the picture." I think I was three-quarters of the way across the country going to Oregon before the final results came in.

HESS: You were here in Washington on election day, though?

DAVIDSON: Yes.

HESS: What do you recall of the role played in the campaign by Secretary of the Interior Julius Krug?

DAVIDSON: Well, I think Secretary Krug played a much larger role in the campaign than he's given credit for.

You mentioned once before that the Democratic National Committee did not have very much money. It was therefore determined that Krug would be more effective being in the West as Secretary of the Interior, rather than as one of the campaign

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speakers sent out by the National Committee.

If one is out West on official business, it means that the Government pays your expenses. Krug followed up Truman's visit and made a trip through the West. He made several trips to New Mexico, Arizona, Oregon, and Washington, meeting with groups, explaining that the Republicans were making promises and said what they were going to do if elected, but their votes in Congress proved otherwise. Now, since these trips were not as widely publicized as some of the other people, the impression was given that Krug did not campaign for the President, but this was completely erroneous.

HESS: You mentioned the impression was given that he did not participate in the campaign. Shortly after the election there appeared several items in the newspapers to the effect that Mr. Krug had gone hunting and could not be found when the Democratic National Committee wanted to talk to him and solicit his aid. Who was behind those

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stories?

DAVIDSON: There were a number of newspaper stories planted, a number of items saying that Krug was going to be out because he didn't campaign, that were placed in the various newspapers at that time, leaked to them.

HESS: Who leaked and who planted, and why, to the best of your knowledge?

DAVIDSON: I think this may be a part of the interview that I'd like to think about, and at least for the time being, I do not want to put it on tape.

HESS: You can close it for any length of time that you'd like.

DAVIDSON: Okay, then we can take a look at it. As I've pointed out from time to time during the interview, the difference between Krug's and my philosophies, on the way the Department should be run, and Oscar Chapman's and Harold Ickes',

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was substantial. There was no question but that Oscar Chapman wanted to be Secretary of the Interior. He was close to Mr. Truman. He was his advance man on several of his trips, and I think that probably a number of the statements about Krug which were in the press, were probably inspired by Chapman.

HESS: Mr. Krug was replaced about a year later, and during that period of time there were several other speculations in the press.

DAVIDSON: Wasn't he replaced quicker than a year later? I thought he was replaced...

HESS: No, his resignation was November 10, 1949.

DAVIDSON: November 10, 1949.

HESS: And, of course, the election was in November of '48. The effective date of his resignation was December 1, 1949, the same day Mr. Chapman was sworn in.

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All right, we've just been checking the scrapbooks and have found that right after the election there was a good deal of news in the papers that Mr. Krug was on the way out, even though it was a year later before he left. Who was responsible at this time for the stories that Mr. Krug was on the way out? The same man?

DAVIDSON: I think, as you know from other people who have been interviewed, Chapman had a very close working relationship with a number of members of the press. Drew Pearson, for example, was one of his closest friends. I think one of the Cabinet officers under Truman refused to attend any Cabinet meetings with Oscar because he said that what happened always ended up in Drew Pearson's column -- everything that was said.

HESS: I missed that. Who didn't want to attend the meetings?

DAVIDSON: One of the Cabinet officers. I've forgotten

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which one it was. Who was Defense Secretary at that time?

HESS: Was this during Marshall's time?

DAVIDSON: No. Was it Forrestal?

HESS: Forrestal left in 1949, and then Louis Johnson came in.

DAVIDSON: Well, anyway, it was along in that period, and of course, if Krug was out of town, Under Secretary Chapman would attend Cabinet meetings in his place. This succeeded -- it was a constant needling operation -- and I think Oscar was very close or certainly gave the impression of being very close to the President during that time, and the President seemed to appreciate what Oscar had done during the campaign as advance man. So I think probably Krug's position during that year was just gradually undermined and became weaker, and so he decided that it was time for him to leave and submitted his resignation.

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HESS: Going back just a little bit, but was there some talk back before the convention that Mr. Krug might join Mr. Truman on the ticket as his vice-presidential running mate?

DAVIDSON: It is my recollection or understanding, that Senator Barkley -- who was a Senator from Kentucky -- and you must remember that Krug was Public Service Commissioner of Kentucky before he came to TVA. He and Barkley knew each other very well, and it was my understanding that Senator Barkley once approached Krug to discuss with him the possibility of his running as the vice-presidential candidate with President Truman.

HESS: Did Krug ever mention anything about that to you?

DAVIDSON: Well, I don't know where I got it from, if I didn't get it from Krug. It might have been Carl [Carlton] Skinner, who was his public relations man and very close to Cap. I know I had that impression. Now I wouldn't have picked it up just

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out of the blue. But I have forgotten where it came from.

HESS: But if true, it sounded as if he was on the President's team and not the type who was getting ready to go hunting for two or three weeks, purposely, where he could not be notified and reached.

DAVIDSON: I agree, and Cap, was on the President's team. Of course, this was before the so-called pictures were taken.

HESS: What pictures?

DAVIDSON: Well, these pictures that were supposedly used for the same purpose as the newspaper leaks, in destroying Krug.

HESS: What were the pictures, and how were they taken? Who was responsible for the photographs?

DAVIDSON: I would not like to attribute that kind of activity to anyone.

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HESS: These were the photographs showing Mr. Krug in various compromising positions with young ladies, is that correct?

DAVIDSON: I'd rather not discuss it.

HESS: All right.

DAVIDSON: I suppose a number of us feel that these newspaper leaks, the newspaper stories, that Krug had not taken part in the campaign -- that he had not done this or that -- and that Krug and the Boss were not getting along, were probably all a part of the same operation.

HESS: We will discuss Mr. Krug further when we come to the point in time of his resignation, but moving on from the election in November and then on January 20, 1949, Mr. Truman made his inaugural address on the steps of the Capital, and his fourth point in the inaugural address became known as the Point 4, technical assistance to underdeveloped countries. Can you tell me about

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the development of that idea, how it came to fruition, and how that point got into the inaugural address?

DAVIDSON: No, I really can't. I have no recollection of that one.

HESS: I'll read what I got from one clipping in your scrapbook. This was an article by Ray Cromley:

Point 4 was suggested to Mr. Truman by Clark Clifford, his personal counselor. The idea had been given to Mr. Clifford, directly and indirectly, by several presidential advisers, including Secretary of Agriculture Brannan, Interior Department Under Secretary C. Girard Davidson, and State Department Assistant Secretary Willard Thorp.

They gave you a promotion in there.

DAVIDSON: That was done every now and then.

HESS: That appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*. But you recall nothing about the development of Point 4?

DAVIDSON: No, I really don't. Maybe when I go through my file I will find something that will refresh

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my recollection on it, but it may also be one of the things that came out of our Monday night meetings.

HESS: The management of the Point 4 program was placed with the State Department. There was an interdepartmental advisory board set up to give advice, but the State Department had the final say on the allocation of funds. However, the spending of the funds was largely in the hands of the various governmental agencies responsible for such procedures. Agricultural projects were under Agriculture; power projects and power development in foreign lands were under Interior. There have been various views put forward that Point 4 would have operated better if it had not

been in the State Department. There were efforts made to keep Point 4 as a separate entity and not place it under the State Department. Do you recall anything about that?

DAVIDSON: I really don't. I'll see if I can find anything

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that will refresh my recollection of it. It's very difficult to try to remember what happened twenty-five years ago.

HESS: It sure is.

DAVIDSON: I remember the Morgenthau commission. I remember Henry Fowler was running something for Morgenthau. Now when was that?

HESS: It must have been pretty early, because Morgenthau was Secretary of the Treasury and was replaced early in the Truman administration.

DAVIDSON: Was that in '45-'46, because this was to try to do something to make Germany a pastoral state.

HESS: That's what was known as the Morgenthau plan. That was really developed during the war.

DAVIDSON: Henry Fowler, who had been in Treasury, headed up that commission.

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HESS: Morgenthau left in July. Mr. Truman, of course, took over on April 12, 1945, on the death of Roosevelt, and Morgenthau was soon replaced by Fred Vinson.

DAVIDSON: I remember the meetings. I wonder...

HESS: On the Morgenthau plan?

DAVIDSON: Maybe it was because of my connection with the War Production Board or Bonneville. I just assumed that it was at the time I was Assistant Secretary. I'll see if I can find something on that, too.

HESS: What were your general observations on the feasibility of turning Germany and the Ruhr Valley, with its coal and steel and iron and iron ore, into pastureland?

DAVIDSON: Well, you know, there were great conflicting points of view. You have to realize that Germany wanted the iron and coal resources, but on the

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other hand, you also realize that Germany had been responsible for the preceding two world wars, and this was a great problem. How were you going to let them have the tremendous

resources and not have the same thing happen a third time? I don't think that problem has been solved, and it was the Morgenthau commission that wrestled with these problems, but couldn't come out with a satisfactory answer. I think only history will be able to tell.

HESS: Do you think it may have been a good idea?

DAVIDSON: Yes, I think it may have been. We've just come back from Europe, and when you look at the resurgence of the Fascist party over there both in Italy and Germany, and even the so-called National Renaissance Party in this country, it is frightening. But France isn't much better so I don't know what we could have done.

HESS: You have just come back from Europe?

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DAVIDSON: Yes, we were in Europe about a month during May and June. We were there during the elections in Italy.

HESS: Tell me about the resurgence of Fascism.

DAVIDSON: The Fascists made considerable gains in the election, and I guess this is one of the things that makes me go back and wonder. I think it's foolish for us to continue to spend the huge chunks of money which we're sending to Europe now for protecting Germany and Italy and these countries' economies are better off than ours. Here we are, spending millions of dollars for them. But these Italian elections made us very conscious of the growing strength of the Fascists.

HESS: Did you go through Germany also?

DAVIDSON: No. This was primarily just in France, but we were in Italy for a time.

HESS: I have heard that the same resurgence is taking place in areas of Germany. Have you heard

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that?

DAVIDSON: I'm sure that's correct, yes.

HESS: To begin this afternoon, Mr. Davidson, let's discuss the Columbia Valley Administration. What part did you play in the attempt to establish a CVA?

DAVIDSON: As I mentioned earlier, coming from TVA I felt very strongly that a Columbia Valley Authority would be the most sensible way to handle the governmental natural resource projects in the Pacific Northwest, as well as in the other large river basins. Even when I was general counsel of the Bonneville Power Administration before I became Assistant Secretary of the Interior, I was making speeches in the Pacific Northwest advocating a TVA type of administration for more efficient Government operations.

When Secretary Krug came to the Interior Department and I became an Assistant Secretary, we were both

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oriented in the TVA tradition, and felt that the resources in the Columbia Valley as well as in the Missouri Valley and others, could best be handled by a decentralized agency located in the region itself. Accordingly, both the Secretary and I urged this type of administration whenever we could. President Truman agreed with this philosophy, and on January 13, 1949, directed a letter to Secretary Krug saying that he had recommended to the 81st Congress the establishment of a Columbia Valley Authority, designating Charles Murphy to act for him in developing the legislative program for the executive branch, and asking that the Secretary work closely with Mr. Murphy. The Secretary wrote the President on January 19, designating me as the Department's representative to work with Mr. Murphy and others in coordinating this project.

Then on March 21, the President sent another memorandum to the Secretary of the Interior asking Secretary Krug to take the lead for the executive

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branch in presenting the bill to Congress, including arranging of supporting testimony. He sent copies of this memorandum to the Secretaries of Agriculture, Army and Commerce, as well as the chairman of TVA, so that those agencies would give any assistance which might be necessary.

Since I was designated as the individual in the Interior Department to handle its work, and the President gave Interior the duty of preparing the legislative proposals and taking the lead in securing testimony, obviously, I then was in a key position to go forward with this.

HESS: If the President supported this measure why weren't you successful? What went wrong?

DAVIDSON: It is a very, very long story. It's no news to you or anyone else that there are a number of bureaucratic jealousies in the executive department.

HESS: What caused you more trouble, jealousies in the

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bureaucracy or the private power companies? Which would be the major obstacle?

DAVIDSON: They were both very formidable opponents, and I would assume that if we could have gotten the wholehearted support of the agencies without the undercutting, that we could have done it in spite of the power companies.

HESS: When you read the newspaper clippings of the period, the opposition of the power companies appears to be the main obstacle.

DAVIDSON: Obviously, when the President of the United States says he is for something and sends a memorandum to the chief opponents of his ideas, saying that he expects them to cooperate, they can hardly come out publicly and oppose it.

HESS: The opposition has to be carried on undercover, more or less?

DAVIDSON: Undercover, working with their friends on the

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Hill, working with the congressional committees. You may recall that Congressman [William Madison] Whittington of Mississippi, who was chairman of the Public Works Committee of the House, and who had long been the Army Engineers' chief spokesman on flood control projects, was one of the chief opponents. Well, there was no question that he was furnished all kinds of materials from the Army Engineers, because they didn't want to give up their jurisdiction and authority to build dams, and handle navigation and flood control in this area. The same with the Bureau of Reclamation, even though this agency was in the Department of Interior. We never knew precisely who they were talking to on the Hill, but we knew that they could find receptive ears with Senators and Congressmen, like Senator [Henry C.] Dworshak of Idaho, who had always been the spokesman for the Idaho Power Company, so the agencies and the power companies worked jointly in defeating it.

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However, I think we made considerable progress in getting the Columbia Valley Authority before the people, and a great deal of decentralization of government operations has resulted. TVA was created back in the dark days of the depression in the early days of the New Deal. The Army had objected strenuously to letting Muscle Shoals get out from under its jurisdiction, and it took George Norris years to finally get a TVA bill passed and Wilson Dam transferred to TVA. It took a depression to lick the power companies and the bureaucratic agencies. The idea of TVA has been exported successfully to foreign countries, but we've never been able to achieve the same thing in any of our other river basins.

Now, as you will note from not only the scrapbooks, but from the number of speeches that I made (which are in several volumes and will be given to the Truman Library), this was a very hot issue in the Northwest. We defeated Senator Dworshak in Idaho primarily on this issue, with

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former Governor [Bert Henry] Miller, but unfortunately Senator Miller died about three months after he had taken office, and the Republican Governor of Idaho reappointed Dworshak, which was a blow to getting CVA through. This probably sounded the death knell of CVA as much as anything.

HESS: What was Secretary Krug's view on establishing a Columbia Valley Administration?

DAVIDSON: Well, Secretary Krug, as I said, had come from being chief power manager of TVA. He was thoroughly imbued and indoctrinated with the efficiency as well as the superior type of planning and management for resources which occurred with a basin type agency. He

was thoroughly committed to the CVA principle and gave every assistance that he could along the way.

HESS: Was he a vigorous advocate? You were.

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DAVIDSON: Let's put it this way: I had been given the authority by him and he thought I was doing a good job, so he didn't have to become as ardent and continuous a proponent as I was. I became the spokesman, I knew the bills backwards and forwards. I took on debates with Congressmen and Senators, people throughout the country, explaining what a CVA was all about; drafting and modifying bills along with Mr. Murphy, and Senator [Hugh Burnton] Mitchell of Washington, and the other sponsors of the legislation. When Krug was out West and made a speech or was asked a question about the CVA in a press conference, he would make a magnificent statement on its behalf because of his knowledge and background. He was a very strong advocate. As an Assistant Secretary, it depends a great deal on how much support you are getting from the Secretary. This determines the type of fight one can put on, since no one every likes to have the rug cut out from under him.

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HESS: What was the view of the Under Secretary of Interior at that time, Oscar Chapman?

DAVIDSON: Let's put it this way.: The President was for the CVA, and had said that the CVA should be adopted. Therefore, technically and officially, I'm sure Secretary Chapman was also for it. However, as I mentioned earlier, there was a vast difference in philosophy of administration by those in the Department of Interior under Ickes -- and this is when Secretary Chapman came in -- as distinguished from the type of administration which Secretary Krug and I were interested in.

Our view was to obtain maximum decentralization. We felt that the closer Government agencies were to people involved, the better the decisions would be. Of course, they had to be made in a Federal context. You could not delegate to the states the Federal Government's authority over interstate waters. But on the other hand, Secretary Ickes, whom I think Chapman went along with, believed in

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centralized administration; that decisions would only be proper if made in Washington, D.C. As evidence of this, when Krug, Gardner and I went into the top positions in Interior, we would have mountains of mail to be signed by the Secretary, because Ickes seemed to feel that the only honest person around was the Secretary; therefore, everything had to come to the Secretary for approval since he had found some Indian superintendent out on one of the Indian reservations taking money and supplies. As a result, we were having to pass on the question of whether a particular Indian could spend a certain amount for a house, or a Cadillac, or something of this kind. Our judgment was no good on this, as well as expensive and slow in reaching a decision. This was the type of responsibility that we were trying to get in the field so the decision could be made by someone much closer to the scene.

Chapman did not like controversy. He wanted always to try to smooth things out, and one could

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not carry on the same kind of battle when he was Secretary. I think you pointed out that after Chapman became Secretary, he redelegated authority and, I think, I ended up with the Bureau of Mines and the Geological Survey. I had been General Counsel at Bonneville, at TVA, and the attorney in charge of power at the War Production Board, and this was an integral part of the whole CVA fight.

HESS: Did you go in to speak to him about that?

DAVIDSON: I did. As I recall, I think I said, "What are you going to do about the CVA?" He answered: "Oh, yes, I forgot about that, but I'll put out a memorandum." So then he put out a memorandum saying that I was to continue with CVA.

HESS: Even though you hadn't been assigned to be in charge of public power?

DAVIDSON: That's right. He said I was to continue with the CVA. But he could hardly have helped

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doing this because, after all, I was the administration spokesman, and the White House would undoubtedly have questioned him had he not done this.

HESS: How much of an effect on CVA do you think your resignation had? Did it lose its main advocate?

DAVIDSON: When I finally resigned, the newspapers said that CVA was dead as a dodo.

HESS: How much of an effect do you think the Korean war, which came along in the last of June in 1950, had on such a domestic program as this, when we had to change the spotlight from domestic to foreign.?

DAVIDSON: When was this, June of '50?

HESS: June of 1950.

DAVIDSON: I think properly handled, it might have been a very good was to have the Columbia Valley Administration adopted as a more efficient means of getting power for needed uses.

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HESS: Did you stress that point at the time, do you recall? This was in June of '50 and you left last of that year? Did you see the Korean war in the context of an opportunity at that time?

DAVIDSON: I probably didn't at that time. You see I think there is a lot of background that maybe just as well go into now. After Mr. Chapman -- when was it that he was appointed?

HESS: December 1, 1949.

DAVIDSON: December 1, 1949.

HESS: The change in Interior took place about one year after the election. When Mr. Krug left, there were five men who were prominently mentioned in the press as possible replacement Harold Ickes was one; Senator O'Mahoney of Wyoming was another; Mr. Chapman was one; you one; and Mon Wallgren was the fifth.

DAVIDSON: Mon Wallgren was in Washington State at

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time. He was a very close friend of the President's.

HESS: Yes he was, and had been for quite some time. Do you think that Harold Ickes had a good chance of getting his job back at that time?

DAVIDSON: I don't really think so.

HESS: Do you think it was mostly newspaper talk?

DAVIDSON: I think it was newspaper talk, although he did come in...

HESS: What about Mon Wallgren?

DAVIDSON: I think that was a possibility, because the President was very friendly with Mon, and he liked him. However, Mon was Governor then, and I think maybe he just decided that he'd rather stay out there.

HESS: What about the Senator?

DAVIDSON: I doubt it, although Senator O'Mahoney was

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also a close friend of the Presidents.

I've mentioned before that after Chapman became Secretary of Interior, there was no Under Secretary appointed until after I resigned.

HESS: Did you think you were going to get that job?

DAVIDSON: Yes: I had had lunch with Secretary Chapman after these newspaper stories had appeared in which these people were mentioned as possible candidates for Secretary, of which I

was one. I never really considered myself a very strong contender for the position, because I thought that others had better connections with the President and were better known than I. But I remember Oscar had me for lunch in the Secretary's private dining room and said, in effect, "Look, Jebby, I'm older than you are, I've been in the Department longer. I'm entitled to be Secretary, and I wish you would pull off those who are pushing you, and if I get it, you'll be Under Secretary."

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So I said, "Okay, Oscar, I agree with you, that you're entitled to it."

He said, "I won't stay too long in the office, and then you can move on up," as I recall the conversation. But you know you lose out on details after twenty-five years.

So, anyway, Oscar was appointed, and I waited for my appointment to go through, which it didn't. Let's see, he was appointed in December. I expected it to go through right away, and it didn't.

Well, after a few months, various people who were my supporters over on the Hill (and I had a number of very good friends) would ask me why my appointment hadn't gone through. I remember on one occasion a group of Senators showed up at the Department -- I didn't know they were coming -- but Oscar felt, obviously, that I had put it together, because they were all sitting in his outer office and I got a buzz to come in the back way because my office was right next to the Secretary's office.

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I went in and he said, "There's a group of Senators waiting out there to talk about you as Under Secretary. I don't like this kind of pressure."

And I said, "Look, Oscar, they're my friends, I appreciate it, but I didn't know they were coming and I'm certainly not responsible for their being here."

Anyway, I left and they went in to see him. I remember some of them. There was Senator [Clinton P.] Anderson, Senator [Dennis] Chavez, Senator [Theodore Francis] Green of Rhode Island, Senators [Walter G.] Magnuson and [Henry M.] Jackson, Senator [Wayne L.] Morse, and it may have been Senator Young, but I've forgotten all of them. It's somewhere in the record. They said, "We are here to ask about Davidson being Under Secretary." Senator Morse gave me a report after the meeting.

And Oscar said, "Well, I'm all for Jebby, but the President will not approve of him, because he caused so much trouble in the desegregation of the swimming pools, and the President thinks

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he's somewhat of a troublemaker, and he just won't appoint him."

Well, obviously, they took that at face value. But sometime later Senator Morse, who was a good friend of Truman's and also a good friend of mine, arranged an appointment with the President, and said, "What is it you have against Davidson that you won't appoint him Under Secretary?"

Truman said, "Nothing." He said, "I'd be very happy to appoint Davidson Under Secretary, but I have never received a recommendation from Oscar Chapman that this be done."

James Patton, of the National Farmers Union, and a friend of Chapman's, also had a meeting with the President on my behalf, and was also told that Chapman had never made the recommendation.

Thus it became obvious that Chapman's commitment to me had been only a political ploy which he had no intention of honoring. In addition, he took the bureaus I had been supervising away from me and gave them to Bill Warne.

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HESS: I found a clipping on that subject. It indicated that when Chapman took over he appointed William Warne Assistant Secretary in Charge of Water and Power Development, and you were in charge of Mineral Resources.

DAVIDSON: My background was basically not mineral resources. I'd always been in public power.

HESS: And Mr. Chapman knew that.

DAVIDSON: Yes. But you see, Bill Warne also was more traditional old line department. He'd come out of the Bureau of Reclamation, and Krug and I were the outsiders. The program staff and the people we'd brought in were firmly on our side. But Chapman's philosophy was different: he was trying to bring Interior back to the old department, not the new; and he didn't want people around who didn't agree. I still advocated CVA and was still pushing for it, the President was still for it, but Chapman's support was at most lukewarm, contrasted

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to Krug's. I felt that with the support that I had on the Hill and other places, that Oscar couldn't appoint any other person Under Secretary as long as I was around, and yet I knew he would not voluntarily give me any position of real authority.

Thus stripped of assignments that would make my Government work meaningful, I decided to resign from Interior and work for causes in which I believed outside of Government.

HESS: Mr. Richard Searles was brought in as Under Secretary after you left?

DAVIDSON: Yes, after I left.

HESS: What had been his background, do you recall? He was brought in from the outside.

DAVIDSON: He was brought in from the outside, and I didn't know much about him. The President accepted my resignation by letter on December 21 asking me to do a study of power resources in

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relation to defense needs, which I did, for a month or so after I got back to the Pacific Northwest.

HESS: Whatever came of that?

DAVIDSON: I turned it in. It was quite an exhaustive report, which recommended that we had to develop some strong advocacy for the construction of several additional dams and power plants in the Northwest. I turned it in to Secretary Chapman, and I don't know what happened with it. It did not see the light of day.

HESS: Do you think that was a parting shot on his part to give you an assignment when you left, and really not pay much attention to your report?

DAVIDSON: It may have been, but I really don't know. I just know that the report didn't get anywhere.

HESS: Back on CVA, Michael Straus was Commissioner of Reclamation. What was his view about establishing a CVA?

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DAVIDSON: Well, if you recall, in yesterday's discussion, you asked me how I got into the Interior Department as Assistant Secretary, and I pointed out that the administrator of Bonneville, Paul Raver, and I had been ordered into Ickes' office to explain why we had been advocating a CVA, and the chief prosecuting witness was Mike Straus. Then several weeks later Krug went in as Secretary and I as Assistant Secretary. No one assumed that Mike had changed his position. He had to shut up because this was the Secretary's and then the President's program. I had no question but that Mike was feeding people over on the Hill information, along with the Army Engineers, to stop the CVA.

HESS: Because he thought his bureau would lose authority?

DAVIDSON: His bureau would have. We would have taken away Grand Coulee Dam, for example, which was under the Bureau of Reclamation. It would have

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been administered by the Columbia Valley Administration.

I used the following as an example to show why we needed a CVA. A barge was going up the Columbia and got stuck on a sandbar. A discharge of water was needed from the Grand Coulee Dam to float it off. So the president of the barge line called the Army Engineers which controlled the flow of water in the river. The Army Engineers said, "We cannot promise water from Grand Coulee because it's under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation." He then called the

Bureau of Reclamation and they said, "Well, we'll look into it and call you back." On returning the call the Bureau said, "Well, we can't do it, because if we discharge water, it will affect the dam of the Puget Sound Power and Light Company down the river and cause them to lose energy -- and the Comptroller General won't let us pay for that."

The barge continued to sit on the sand bar. Finally Bonneville Power Administration was

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called and said, "All right, we'll agree to give back to Puget Sound the amount of power that is taken out." Four or five different Federal agencies were in the act while that barge sat there. It was this kind of problem we were trying to solve. If it had been TVA, they would have released the water and floated the barge and have the barge company pay for whatever the costs were.

Now, Mike and the rest of them wanted to hold on to their jurisdiction. I've felt that to a number of people in Government, jurisdiction, and his particular bureaucracy, is much more important than efficient government.

HESS: In one of the articles in your scrapbooks, I found an article by Richard Neuberger who said that there were many who believed that you would be CVA's first administrator if it was established.

DAVIDSON: As peculiar as that may seem, that never entered my head. I didn't have any money. I had had

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to leave as Assistant Secretary to go back and try to replenish the till. I knew then that I had to go back and try to make enough money to support my family. During the time that I was Assistant Secretary I had to sell all the property I owned in Louisiana in order to pay the additional freight of holding the job. So, I don't think I could have afforded it. But that problem never arose.

HESS: Let's discuss the change of one word, Columbia Valley Authority to Columbia Valley Administration. Why was that change made, and whose idea was it to change that word?

DAVIDSON: I don't recall. The problem with the word "authority" was that we were batted all over the West by the power, companies and its related interests, the Reclamation Society and so forth, that an authority was synonymous with dictatorship. "Administration" was an easier word to sell. I didn't care what it was called. It was the results that we were interested in. And all along, we were always willing

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to compromise, and the President recognized that we were willing to do that, but the power companies and the agencies were working hand in hand to keep their jurisdiction and the status quo.

HESS: On April 13, 1949, the President sent a special message to Congress recommending the establishment of CVA, Columbia Valley Administration, this was Item 77 of the 1949 volume of the *Public Papers*. Did you work on the President's message?

DAVIDSON: I'm sure I did. I worked on the bill and worked very hard with Charles Murphy and Dave Bell at the White House.

HESS: Did you sit in on any sessions at which Mr. Truman may have been present, either on the wording of the legislation or of the message?

DAVIDSON: No.

HESS: But with his assistants, with Bell and Murphy?

DAVIDSON: Always with the assistants.

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HESS: Do you know how much input Mr. Truman may have had into this message?

DAVIDSON: No, I do not.

HESS: But he was interested in the subject?

DAVIDSON: Obviously, or he wouldn't have sent the messages and sent the memorandum around telling Interior to take the lead. By the time he sent that memorandum around, I think I was already known as a pretty hard driver.

HESS: Did you ever hear of Mr. Truman's reaction to the fact that his wishes were not being carried out by the Administration? You seem to be one of the few people who was doing what Mr. Truman wanted done. Did you ever hear any of his reactions to that situation?

DAVIDSON: Not on this. After all -- and I guess if you put this in perspective -- with all of the problems that confronted the President, you can understand

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why he couldn't spend too much time on CVA by itself.

I think if there had ever been any flagrant action such as one of his administrators going over and testifying against the CVA, or doing something like that, he would have heard from the President, but undercover work is hard to expose. It's not the kind of thing I mentioned yesterday about the recognition of Israel when an order was issued and it was not carried out. This time the President issued an order and it was carried out. A bill was introduced, the message was there, testimony was given for the bill, and I think even Mike Straus went over and testified in favor of CVA.

HESS: Even though he privately opposed the operation?

DAVIDSON: Yes.

HESS: What was the main difficulty, you just couldn't get the votes?

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DAVIDSON: Well, I think the passage of a project of this kind depends a great deal on the sentiment in the region. That's why it was so important to defeat Dworshak in Idaho, because Idaho had been the chief state fighting it.

HESS: The main stumbling block?

DAVIDSON: The main stumbling block. As I said, Magnuson and Jackson of Washington were for it. By then, Wayne had really gotten neutralized, although before his election he said that he was opposed to it, but if you read his speech he could take either side. That's why he took fourteen pages in the *Congressional Record* explaining his position so he could pick out any way he wanted to go.

Now, with the Washington Senators for it, with Oregon split and Idaho vehemently opposed, with the exception -- I've forgotten whether Glen Taylor was still Senator. I guess he was. But Glen was ineffective after the Wallace campaign, so it had to

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be somebody else. I think that the death knell of the CVA was the death of Senator Miller. His defeat of Senator Dworshak had changed the complexion in the Senate as far as Idaho's position on the CVA was concerned. We had Compton White in the northern district of Idaho who was strong for it. There was a Republican, John Carfield Sanborn, from southern Idaho who was opposed to it. Having two Senators and one Congressman from Idaho for it, rather than one ineffective Senator and one strong opponent, Dworshak, would have made the difference and the CVA would have passed.

HESS: I believe that most of the Governors were opposed, isn't that correct?

DAVIDSON: That's correct.

HESS: According to a clipping I found, Governor [Arthur B.] Langlie of Washington, Governor [Douglas] McKay of Oregon, Governor [Vail]

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Pitman of Nevada, and Governor [Charles A.] Robins of Idaho, all opposed it.

DAVIDSON: Now, let's see, Nevada had practically nothing to do with it. There are no people in the watershed in the State of Nevada, so let's eliminate Nevada. Robins was a strong Republican and private power man. He was the one who reappointed Dworshak after Miller's death. Langlie was a strong Republican and opposed it from the State of Washington. McKay was a strong Republican, and became Secretary of the Interior under Eisenhower. So we had the

Republicans completely against the CVA, and the Democrats were for it, and Truman was a Democrat.

HESS: You mentioned that one of the important considerations was public attitude in the area. How did you try to sway the public attitude? How did you try to present your program?

DAVIDSON: Well, from the list of speeches which you have there...

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HESS: Frequent appearances, is that right?

DAVIDSON: Yes, and I used to accept every invitation that I could, to the extent that I was criticized by Senator Harry Cain that this was all I was doing. I refute that, because when I made a speech, and even assuming that there was one at lunch and another one at dinner, which I didn't do often, I was attending to Department business for the balance of the day. Usually I was in centers, such as Spokane, which was the center of the mining industry; Boise, which was involved heavily in irrigation, or Portland, where Bonneville was located and also the head of my Pacific Northwest Field Committee. You must remember that I had the responsibility assigned to coordinate the Interior agencies in the Pacific Northwest; and in the Pacific Northwest Interior is the dominant Federal agency.

HESS: On the subject of the feeling and the sentiment in the area, I found a clipping dealing with the

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question of holding a referendum among the people of the Pacific Northwest. Do you think that was a good idea or not? The clipping said you did not agree with it.

DAVIDSON: No, I did not, because I didn't think a referendum would have been productive. An issue of this kind, which did not change any of the activities in which Government agencies were engaged, but only proposed a different administrative method of handling, is not a proper subject for a referendum. I felt that this was a matter of Federal Government Administration on which the Senators and Representatives could and should take on themselves. It was up to the people to elect people who would be responsive to their wills on this and other issues. Federal action was required on handling the country's resources, and a referendum by the people of several states could be nothing but an expression of opinion. It would have been a waste of time, and not really productive of any good results.

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HESS: Do you recall anything in particular about the decision to locate an atomic energy plant at Arco, Idaho? There was some speculation in the press that David Lilienthal's decision to favor that location was because he wanted to build a large plant that would need great quantities of electric energy which would give a boost to the establishment of CVA. Also I note in another clipping, that Secretary Krug had brought suit against the Idaho Power Company to prevent them from building transmission lines from Bliss to American Falls. The speculation in the press was

that this was in order to keep private lines away from the expected market at Arco. Do you recall that?

DAVIDSON: That's over near Idaho Falls, yes.

HESS: In other words, it looks to me like what they're trying to do here, according to the press, and that could have been a completely slanted view, was for David Lilienthal to go in

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(he was head of the Atomic Energy Commission), to go in and build a large atomic energy plant and say, "Now, we need energy here. We need electrical power." But Krug is keeping private power lines from being built there, so it would seem that they were trying to create a need for construction of Government plants.

DAVIDSON: I think that all of this, and the motives attributed to Krug and Lilienthal were figments of the imagination of a hostile press. I do recall, because I was the general counsel at Bonneville at the time the atomic energy plant was built at Hanford, Washington, and that it was essential for the plant to have an extremely steady, reliable, and permanent supply of electricity, and we had to build in lines from various sources to give this reliability. Nobody knew why we were doing it at the time.

HESS: Did you know at the time?

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DAVIDSON: No.

HESS: You just knew you were going to need a heck of a lot of energy?

DAVIDSON: I knew we needed a whole lot of energy, and I knew it had to be absolutely foolproof as far as the outages were concerned. I didn't know why, but we were doing it. We had orders.

Arco, over near Idaho Falls, was built at a later date. But the situation in Idaho was completely different from that in the State of Washington. The Idaho Power Company has always dominated the politics in Idaho. As such, they were successful in keeping any public lines out. We refused to grant any right-of-way over public lands to power companies that would not wheel Government power over their lines, and this was undoubtedly what was involved in the lawsuit. I've forgotten what the article said was finally worked out. What's the date of this?

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HESS: I'm not sure. I didn't write the date down.

DAVIDSON: I think this is after '50.

HESS: It could well have been.

DAVIDSON: I think it was after '50 and I was out of the middle of that, but I agree with the Government's position. If a private power company wants to build a transmission line over Government lands, it is proper for the Government to insert a provision in the right-of-way agreement that to the extent of any unused capacity in the line, the Government could transmit its power upon payment to the company of reasonable compensation.

HESS: What are some of the other methods that the private power companies used to keep CVA out, anything in particular, anything that we should put down before we nail the lid on this?

DAVIDSON: Well, they are well-heeled, well-financed, and were tough opponents. There was not an election that took place in any state where a

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power company didn't have a pretty active role.

HESS: What is the likelihood of an administration or an authority of this nature, CVA and MVA, being established at some point in the future?

DAVIDSON: Some point in the future is a long time. I would hope that it would not be necessary for us to go through another depression of the kind which occurred in '29, '30, '31 and '32 to bring it about. When Roosevelt came in, he was able to bring some of the great social legislation which we have still on the books today: Social Security, the SEC regulations after the Wall Street debacle, Federal Deposit Insurance. TVA came in at that time. There are many progressive and good that should be done, and it is unfortunate that people are not sufficiently interested to force such programs through, unless you have drastic occurrences such as the depression. I hate to believe this, but it sure looks like that is what happens. Therefore, given another big

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depression, and things move in a hurry, then you might get a CVA, but its scope now would be different. For example, I would think it should cover the entire energy field.

HESS: A newspaper headline in your scrapbook mentions a reorganization recommended by the Hoover Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government. The Commission recommended that the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation be combined into a single, integrated Water Development and Use Service in the Department of the Interior. Did that cause a lot of flak in the Department of Interior at that time?

DAVIDSON: No, they were delighted, because you were taking the Army Engineers into the Department of the Interior.

HESS: All right, I should rephrase my question. How mad did that make the Corps of Engineers?

DAVIDSON: Oh, it made them very mad, no question about

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it, but Interior was happy. They thought that was a great reform.

HESS: But nothing came of it?

DAVIDSON: Nothing came of it.

HESS: Was it because of the power of the Corps of Engineers?

DAVIDSON: The power of the Corps of Engineers, yes, and this was Roosevelt's, wasn't it?

HESS: Harry S. Truman did it.

DAVIDSON: Well, I remember that report. We used that report a great deal, calling attention to the examples it cited and saying that the kind of consolidation we were talking about in the CVA would remedy the problem. The Army was battling going into Interior so we said, "Let's create an independent agency," which could be the CVA.

HESS: Where on the scale of the lobbies, speaking of

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the powerful lobbies of great influence in Congress, where on the scale would you place the Corps of Engineers?

DAVIDSON: Number one.

HESS: Number one.

DAVIDSON: Number one. I think it's probably the most powerful lobby.

HESS: Why are they so strong? Have they got a dam in everybody's backyard?

DAVIDSON: No, but they're part of the military establishment, and look at the appropriations that the military receives. Two-thirds of our budget is going to pay for past wars and future wars and supporting the military. I know one thing that used to gripe us was that the Secretary of Interior did not have a private plane, but when you got over into the military, even the assistants had their own plane to

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run all over the country. Those same forces were at work over in Congress. The chairmen of the committees were really spokesmen for the military.

HESS: At the time that Mr. Krug left and your name was mentioned as a possible replacement, would you have liked to have moved into the top spot and become Secretary of the Interior?

DAVIDSON: Of course. I think anybody would.

HESS: Did you have any expectations along that line?

DAVIDSON: No, I did not. No, I would have liked to become Under Secretary, because in the Secretary's absence the Under Secretary attends Cabinet meetings, and that is not the case with an Assistant Secretary, although I was the senior Assistant Secretary.

HESS: What is your overall evaluation of the handling of the Department by Secretary Krug?

DAVIDSON: I think Krug did a good job. His forte

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was administration and he was good at this. He was not out making many policy statements, although I thought his views were great on policy. But as an administrator, I've never found anybody who was so precise and could lay out projects and assign responsibility to the individuals and say, "Have this back at such-and-such a time," and then analyze the various points of view and come out with a decision. I've found very few people who come anywhere close to the kind of analysis and decision making that Krug could do.

HESS: That was his strong point.

DAVIDSON: Yes.

HESS: Did he have any weak points? If you had to name one, what would you name as a weak point?

DAVIDSON: Well, I suppose when one is in public life, the failure to use the media sufficiently is a weakness. One must be recognized sufficiently as

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being on top of the heap to be able to stay there and to be able to bat down some of the opposition when it starts shooting at you.

HESS: In other words, he didn't have a very good press.

DAVIDSON: That's right, he did not. And you know, there are ways and ways of getting the press. Sometimes if you are particular pals with a guy and you let him get scoops, they become somewhat beholden to you. I don't think Cap ever played that kind of a game.

HESS: What would be your general evaluation of the handling of the Department under Secretary Chapman?

DAVIDSON: Generally in this discussion, I have indicated that we were in the process of decentralizing the agencies, trying to make them work with the program committee and the field committees. This gained ascendancy under Krug, but this program

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lost ground under Chapman, so therefore, obviously I don't think Chapman did as good a job.

HESS: I noticed in the clippings that in late 1949, you were approached by certain Oregon Democrats on the question of running for the U.S. Senate against Senator Wayne Morse, correct?

DAVIDSON: Yes.

HESS: Why didn't you run?

DAVIDSON: Well, I suppose two or three reasons: One, I guess I didn't think I could beat him; two, if I could needle him I was very happy. He made a speech that he was opposed to the CVA, and that, naturally, threw him in opposition to me.

HESS: Why did he take that stand?

DAVIDSON: I think that if you read his speech, it's no philosophical stand, it was purely political.

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He was running as a Republican. He practically had to take that position, or he wasn't going to get the Republican nomination again. In later campaigns when he finally came to the conclusion that he could not be renominated by the Republicans, he shifted over to the Democrats' side.

HESS: Do you think that he felt that the majority of people, the majority of votes in Oregon, were opposed, and he was taking what in Oregon was a popular stance?

DAVIDSON: Wayne had two places to go: First, he had to go through a Republican primary, and he had a lot of Republicans mad at him, and the Republicans were almost solidly opposed to a CVA. But if you read his speech, you will see that he was on both sides of the question.

HESS: So first he had to satisfy the Republican electorate, and then the general electorate.

DAVIDSON: Yes.

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HESS: What is your view, do you think that more people in Oregon favored CVA?

DAVIDSON: Yes, the people, yes.

HESS: The people as a whole?

DAVIDSON: All elections on issues depend on the education of the electorate, and it depends on whether they know what they're voting on. And this is a problem. When a great deal of money is spent against a measure such as the CVA, and the fight is not only by various interests but by various bureaus, a great deal of confusion is created. Many people such as those in the

Grange, some parts of labor, and a few other than myself, were making speeches to try to offset all of the innuendoes and all other things which had been put out. If we could have kept that up and the people would have understood what was going on, in my view, there would have been no problem if an election were held.

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HESS: At the time that you were asked to run for U.S. Senator, Mr. Monroe Sweetland was Democratic National Committeeman.

DAVIDSON: Yes.

HESS: His name appears quite often in the records out at the Truman Library, he was a Democrat who was well-known. What do you recall about Mr. Sweetland?

DAVIDSON: At the time when President Roosevelt was in, Mr. Sweetland was National Committeeman, and both Senators and all the Congressmen were Republicans, including the Governor. So, Mr. Sweetland was the only contact with the President for the Democrats in the state. Mr. Sweetland was extremely articulate, aggressive, a great individual, and he is responsible for the rebirth of the Democratic Party in the State of Oregon. He continued as National Committeeman for a number of years out there, and I think he deserves credit,

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much more than anyone else, in bringing strong Democrats into the Government in Oregon.

HESS: Just a few words about some of your involvement with some of the other units of the Department of Interior. You had mentioned earlier in the day that you thought that the Bureau of Indian Affairs should be transferred to the Federal Security Agency.

DAVIDSON: Yes.

HESS: Mr. Oscar Ewing was in charge of FSA at that time, what were his views on the matter? Did you discuss that with him?

DAVIDSON: I sure did.

HESS: You saw him every Monday night.

DAVIDSON: Yes, he thought it made sense and the guys around there thought it made sense. But this is something that has to be done by act of Congress. The opposing argument was that Indians

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had lands and resources and a Government agency has to help the Indians administer these, and this was a proper activity for Interior.

HESS: The Indians have been under the Bureau of Indian Affairs for quite some time. What is your general view of the overall handling of Indian matters by the United States Government?

DAVIDSON: Maybe it was necessary for us to do it the way we have. I think the Government has tried, and it's very difficult to know which way the Indians should go. I felt that they should be integrated into the society, but there's such a strong sentiment by the American Indian Society, I think it is, that they should be preserved outside our society with a culture of their own. The Bureau of Indian Affairs in the Department of Interior has been more or less responsive to each of these points of view, and has been subjected to this tug back and forth, and therefore, nothing's happened. When we

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were in the Department, I thought one of the most bureaucratic, slow, and incompetent agencies was the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Warner Gardner, the other Assistant Secretary, and I used to toss that Bureau back and forth to each other, because neither of us wanted to fool with it. It seemed impossible to do anything. It shouldn't be a resource agency. Indians are people, and that is why I wanted that agency transferred to H. E. W.

HESS: At the time that you were there, the first Commissioner I believe was William A. Brophy.

DAVIDSON: Wasn't it Zimmerman when we came in? Brophy was an Indian, he was Indian ancestry, whom Cap appointed, but he got tuberculosis and he had to leave because he was sick. Now, Bill Brophy, we think, would have done a good job because he understood the problems, he was an Indian himself, or part Indian, but he had to give it up.

HESS: William Zimmerman came in as Acting Commissioner.

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DAVIDSON: Yes, he was Deputy. He had been there for a long time.

HESS: And then John Nichols.

DAVIDSON: Wasn't Myer there? When was Nichols? Brophy was the one I remember we brought in. John Collier had been there under Ickes. Zimmerman was his assistant.

HESS: John Collier?

DAVIDSON: I'm pretty sure it was John Collier. You see, Ickes wanted the job as Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

HESS: John Collier had been Commissioner for years and years.

DAVIDSON: Yes. He had been Commissioner for many years, and he was one that felt that the Indians should be preserved as a separate culture. Dillon Myer, that's who it was. Dillon Myer came in as Commissioner, maybe he was never

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confirmed, but he was appointed. And Brophy was the one that was finally made Commissioner, and we had great expectations from Bill Brophy, of really understanding the problem, being progressive and doing something about it, and then he got sick. Then it went back to the bureaucrats. You see, one of the problems, I explained earlier, was the problem of never getting rid of anybody. And on that next echelon under the Commissioner were people who had been there forever, who had Civil Service tenure, and they feel the best way to stay around is to go to work from 9 to 4 and do nothing -- "don't stick your neck out."

HESS: You really can't get anything done.

DAVIDSON: Correct.

HESS: Mr. Truman used to speak of it as "punching a feather pillow."

DAVIDSON: And this is what you really feel in an old time agency such as Interior. The only one

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that I think was any worse than the Bureau of Indian Affairs was Geological Survey, and it moved with glacial speed..

HESS: Perhaps they felt secure.

DAVIDSON: And a million years to them was as a day. I didn't exactly feel that way. I'd like to have gotten some surveys made all over the West, which has never been done. The West has never been surveyed.

HESS: Let's discuss some of the possessions and territories we had at that time. Mr. Warne was in charge of matters in Alaska, is that right?

DAVIDSON: Yes. I never really had Alaska, because you see Alaska and the Pacific Northwest are very often at odds with each other, so that was consciously done, one region or the other.

HESS: Why do they have that spirit of competition?

DAVIDSON: Because the Seattle Chamber of Commerce for

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so many years dominated the economy of Alaska. They were responsible for fishing interests, canning interests, for financing and everything else, and therefore, anybody who represented the Northwest...

HESS: The Alaskans didn't trust them?

DAVIDSON: No, and rightfully they didn't. I am in Alaska a great deal now.

HESS: You have a law office there, too, do you not?

DAVIDSON: Yes.

HESS: You did go to Hawaii at times, didn't you, and the Governor there was Ingram Stainback. What was the problem of getting statehood for Hawaii and Alaska? This is a big problem. Now they have statehood. Why didn't Hawaii and Alaska obtain statehood during the Truman administration?

DAVIDSON: The old problem of whether they were going

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to come in as free states or slave states. This was it, basically; because of their anticipated votes on civil rights, the Southerners didn't want them. There would then be four more Senators who would vote in favor of civil rights. That's basically it. I would say that was the underlying consideration. Now they could find a lot of reasons; that Alaska and Hawaii are not contiguous to the other forty-eight; that Hawaii was going to vote Republican and Alaska Democratic, or vice versa. The two parties always jockeyed as to which one would come in first. But there were no merits to any of the arguments; there was really no good reason for them not to be admitted.

HESS: Did you have any dealings with Governor [Jesus T.] Pinero in Puerto Rico?

DAVIDSON: Yes, I knew [Luis] Munoz-Marin -- well, Pinero, yes. As you know, Munoz-Marin was always a dominant figure in politics. His father had been the one who had broken Puerto Rico away from

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Spain. Munoz was then running the Puerto Rican Senate, and Pinero was his choice to be governor. The first elected governor, of course, was Munoz-Marin himself.

HESS: Did you have any particular dealings with them at the time?

DAVIDSON: Well, I knew them, I remember I was there for the inauguration, and we used to talk a lot, but it doesn't seem to me that I had as much to do with Puerto Rico as I did with the Virgin Islands for some reason.

HESS: Did you have very much to do with the Virgin Islands when our first Governor was down there, Governor [William] Hastie?

DAVIDSON: No.

HESS: Any particular reason that you did not?

DAVIDSON: Well, I'll tell you why it was. The Virgin

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Islands went through the Division of Islands and Territories, and that bureau reported directly to the Secretary.

They went direct to Krug, and I really don't remember why I got involved in the Virgin Islands. I do remember we took a trip out into the Pacific. We stopped over in Hawaii on our way to Guam and Samoa. We were trying to get Guam and Samoa from the Navy into civilian control. And George Marshall was very helpful on that. He was Secretary of State then. He had been the Secretary of Defense, and he felt that Guam and Samoa ought to be taken out from military control. I remember a meeting with him over at the Blair House, and I could have fallen off of my chair when he said, "Yes, I agree that these should no longer stay under military domination." The Navy used to send their busted captains down to be Governor of Guam or Samoa.

HESS: A question on the so-called "Little Cabinet."

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Did you feel there was proper liaison between the Assistant Secretaries of the various departments? Did you have regular meetings between the Assistant Secretaries of Interior and the Assistant Secretaries of Commerce, and the other departments?

DAVIDSON: No, I've forgotten who it was who started these meetings. It might have been Dean Acheson -- I've forgotten who. But, anyway, somebody started having a monthly meeting of the Assistant Secretaries for lunch.

HESS: How long did that last?

DAVIDSON: There must have been about a hundred Assistant Secretaries. And we would meet an hour for lunch once a month...

HESS: Were they more of a social nature?

DAVIDSON: It was a social get-together, but we used to have somebody make a speech. You couldn't get to

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know the others very well that way. However, if you had a particular problem with another department, and you'd happen to meet its Assistant Secretary at lunch, you could find out who to talk to over in his department. But I think a great deal more could have been done in getting the sub-Cabinet together. I don't know whether anything's being done today. But it is helpful in trying to run the Government to let one department know what the others are doing. The way I found out more about what was going on in the Government, was through our Monday night meetings.

HESS: You say that those meetings were started by Dean Acheson?

DAVIDSON: For some reason, that's in the back of my mind.

HESS: What time did he start them? He was Assistant Secretary and then Under Secretary. He left the

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State Department for a couple of years, and then came back in 1949 as Secretary of State.

DAVIDSON: You'd better not take this as too accurate. For some reason I have that impression.

HESS: I was wondering if this was in Mr. Truman's first term or Mr. Truman's second term?

DAVIDSON: I'm not sure. I don't know.

HESS: As you mentioned, these were social meetings. Would it have been better to have a good, substantial business meeting between the Assistant Secretaries? Would that have helped the administration of the Government?

DAVIDSON: I think so. Any time you can get people together to discuss their mutual problems and the relationship of one agency to the other, it's to the good. That way you can avoid agencies going off in completely opposite directions. Therefore, meeting more often would have helped. But, you know, the Assistant

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Secretaries are pretty busy. You really end up with the workloads of the agencies, and particularly in Interior. During my time there, there were only two and later three Assistant Secretaries. But you've got your hands full. The Secretary is more on a different plane, he's going to social and more political functions and he has to attend certain meetings, so the workload of the Department falls upon the Assistants.

HESS: You're too busy for such meetings.

DAVIDSON: That was one of the objections to having them more often, since many thought you'd just go there and waste a couple of hours.

HESS: Moving on to the Cabinet, in your opinion, what did President Truman regard as the proper role for his Cabinet?

DAVIDSON: I wouldn't know this. My contacts with the President were not sufficient for me to have insight on that. I felt that, just looking at

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it from the outside, that our Monday night group was every bit as influential as his Cabinet.

HESS: Approximately how many times did you see or meet with President Truman during his administration?

DAVIDSON: Oh, undoubtedly, no more than three or four times.

HESS: The swimming pool matter?

DAVIDSON: The swimming pool matter.

HESS: Was that the first time?

DAVIDSON: I think this was the first time we were there for a discussion and for him to settle an argument.

I remember the time he was turning on the power for the Grand Coulee Dam.

I was over there for ceremonial occasions, and parties, receptions, and then in his office when some bill was being signed, things of that

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kind. But the swimming pool matter is one I remember since we were arguing positions.

HESS: Just as an opinion, which Cabinet members do you think had more influence with Mr. Truman? Of course, he had quite a few.

DAVIDSON: Yes he did, I always understood that Snyder had a great deal of influence. Forrestal had some. I don't know. I think it all depends on what subject we're talking about.

For example, would Mon Wallgren have more influence than members of the Cabinet, because he saw the President more often and on a more personal basis? They used to meet in the evenings, and talk. I wonder whether social occasions of this kind, where you can discuss issues on a more informal basis, aren't really more important.

HESS: Did you ever meet with the President, in Key West, or aboard the *Williamsburg*, or on any social occasions of that nature?

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DAVIDSON: No.

HESS: Even though it occurred after you left, when did you first become aware that President Truman did not intend to run for re-election in 1952?

DAVIDSON: I don't recall. I assume when he made the announcement.

HESS: At the time he took himself out of the race, who did you think was the best standard-bearer for the Democratic Party in 1952? That was in the spring of 1952.

DAVIDSON: That was Stevenson's nomination, wasn't it? Who were the others?

HESS: There were several others who would like to have had it. Vice President Barkley would liked to have had it. He was too old, according to labor. Kefauver would have been available.

DAVIDSON: As you know, at that time all the candidates

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came out to Oregon for its . primary, and they figured they had to win Oregon, or at least run a good race, if they expected to get anywhere at the convention. We were a little reluctant at that time to make up our mind. So if Mr. Truman wasn't going to run, then we'd take a look at someone else, and I really don't remember. Obviously, we became enthusiastic about Stevenson.

HESS: You attended the convention in Chicago that year, I believe.

DAVIDSON: Yes, I did.

HESS: Do you recall anything in particular and noteworthy about Governor Stevenson's speeches? He made a speech as host Governor, you know.

DAVIDSON: As host Governor, and we thought that was great. Was this the time of the vice-presidential fight between Kefauver...

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HESS: You're thinking of the Kefauver-Kennedy confrontation that occurred in 1956. John Sparkman was the vice-presidential nominee in '52, and as I understand, was not really Stevenson's first choice.

DAVIDSON: I've really forgotten.

HESS: Did you participate in the campaign in 1952?

DAVIDSON: I'm sure I did, but I've forgotten now precisely what I did. '52 -- let's see, I think I first ran for national committeeman in '56. '56 to '60 and then '60 to '64. Those were my terms.

HESS: Mr. Truman put on quite an energetic campaign for Mr. Stevenson in 1952. He took another one of his train rides around the country, and went up through the Northwest. Do you recall seeing Mr. Truman in 1952?

DAVIDSON: I just don't remember. We could probably find in my daily diary or something just where

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I was and what happened.

HESS: When Mr. Truman went from Oregon into California, his first stop in California was at Davis, and Chief Justice Earl Warren (Governor Warren at that time), met him in Davis, California. Of course, they had been friends for a number of years.

DAVIDSON: Yes, the President was out there. I've forgotten just when it was, but now that you mention it, I'm thinking of a picture on my wall of the Attorney General of Oregon, President Truman and myself, standing there at the Portland airport. We had him in the room just talking, and we were there a half an hour before his plane took off. You have jogged my memory. I've forgotten what the occasion was, but he was out there.

HESS: He was out there several times.

What could the Democrats have done to win

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in 1952, anything at all, against General Eisenhower?

DAVIDSON: I doubt it. He was a war hero.

HESS: What's your opinion of the level of Mr. Truman's administrative ability during the time he was President?

DAVIDSON: I thought he was great. He would make a decision and not go back on it come hell or high water; you didn't feel that he was going to make one decision one day and another one that next. I think that is extremely important in an executive.

HESS: What do you see as his greatest achievements in the domestic field? Can you think of one? It's been a long day.

DAVIDSON: It has.

HESS: What do you see as his greatest achievements in the foreign field?

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DAVIDSON: I assume Point 4 and the Marshall plan.

HESS: What in your opinion, will be Mr. Truman's place in history?

DAVIDSON: I think he will go down as one of the greatest Presidents we've ever had.

HESS: What's your favorite memory of Mr. Truman?

DAVIDSON: My favorite memory was when he decided in favor of us, on our civil rights fight on the swimming pools. This is very personal, but after all the arguments he said, "Desegregation of the swimming pools is right, this is the way we're going to do it."

HESS: What is your favorite memory of the days you spent in Washington with the Department of the Interior? What's a highlight of your public career?

DAVIDSON: Probably when I left. Oh, gee, I don't know.

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HESS: Is there anything else you'd like to add regarding Mr. Truman? I've come to the end of this list. It's about time, isn't it?

DAVIDSON: It's getting time, but not only that, I realize if I had reviewed some of this before this discussion, it would have been much more fruitful, but I need things to jog my memory.

HESS: After twenty-five years, we all do.

DAVIDSON: It's very hard. There are certain things which I said I was going to look up, and I think before we talk again, I'm going to try to have sessions with the various assistants which I had during my tenure who might jog my memory. So during these few months I'll try to do that.

HESS: Shall we shut it off for the day?

DAVIDSON: I think so.

HESS: Thank you very much for your time.

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